

ANVIL

Life & the Arts

A Miscellany
edited by
Jack Lindsay

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POET AND PEOPLE

(with special reference to contemporary Scotland)

Joseph MacLeod

*Goodly bull, come, Hero Dionysos,
to Elæans' shrine, a pure shrine, pounding
ox-hoof graced, Goodly Bull, O Goodly Bull !*

WHEN the Greek peasant of what we call "classical" times was chanting the above invocation, he was not thinking of any bull called Dionysos, that he could see with his eyes; nor perhaps even of a good-looking young man called Dionysos with vine leaves wreathed through his hair; still less was he addressing a "personification" of anything. He had in mind, as wide-viewing scholars have now explained to us, a composite idea: bull-ness, god-head, season, clan-ship, enjoyment, trustability, indicated by the word-name "Dionysos."

In the same way Presbyterian worshippers address as Jehovah a composite idea of authority, fatherhood, justness, all-seeing-ness, all-power, a sort of semi-visible patriarch and sage, who has very little in common with the Being of the same name worshipped by many orthodox Jews of to-day. Far back ancestors may have had similar attitudes to animals or plants, combining Dionysos with Jehovah as the clan-father, bull-ness, stag-ship, wild-cat-hood, according as they would be MacLeods, MacKenzies, Sutherlands. In each case the worshipper would be bull-man or stag-man, and so became partially divine and more deeply of his own clan, by drinking the blood of the clan animal or eating its flesh on certain ceremonial occasions but at no other time.

Years pass; and more sophisticated Greek poets address Dionysos or sing his "story." They have gone beyond the primitive belief. They know they are not bull-men, but bull-called men, Bull Clan men. The bloody meat has only a chemical effect on them. But they are not so sure about the blood of the grape, maybe, which has a mental effect on them, incalculable, like inspiration. They have a suspicion that at such hours they have "the god" in them. He has ceased to be a

clan god, for the clans are no more than a name. But he is still a community god; and at his festivals great old ceremonies produce works of "art," in which religion comes out of the past into the present and is enjoyed by all, intensely; the more intensely by the intensity of the "art." The poet is now a public servant, interpreting the god to the people. But the god is still the people. Hence the poet is interpreting the people to themselves. They honour him publicly in consequence, if he does it better than anyone else.

This is the normal estate of all artists in early communities. Each is himself by virtue of the god-head, clan-ness, community feeling, which he can interpret by pen, brush, set-square, chisel, or whatever art-tool best corresponds to the genius of his particular people. Hence you find great dramatists and architects in Greece, but not the former in Rome, nor the latter among the involution-loving Picts. (The genius of a people derives from certain economic, geographical, and historical factors that we cannot here explore.) An artist does not direct this god-head, but he can intensify it. He does this by discovering and revealing new meanings in that god-head. We call this revelation "poetic."

It includes beauty, fancy, similarity, and dissimilarity, and a host of other facets of art and of words and ideas. In this stage an artist's own opinions and personal feelings appear very little in his art, though doubtless they effect its creation in some ways. They are practically indistinguishable from other people's, in any case. Unhappy love affairs, or a cynical or gloomy outlook, are likely to affect his performance, of course, to the same extent as they are likely to affect that of High Priest or Lord Treasurer if these have not achieved a technique of public life. The artist is, in fact, a public functionary.

The matter of his art is so much the matter of public thought and feeling, that he can use a kind of poetic shorthand. At once his public knows what he means when he uses the word Dionysos, or tells the story. Though they are no longer Bull-men, their notions and sentiments go back deep into the past, on predispositions,

preconceptions, prejudices, of which it would be hard to rid them. Call these "traditions."

The early artist has no need to rid the people of their traditions. On the contrary, he tries to deepen or explain them. He loves them. They are his own, taught to him in proverb by the tongue of his father, forming his fears and desires from the silences of his mother, and fortified all his years with his spare-time companions. The deeper he discovers them, by making clearer their meaning, the more he satisfies both himself and the people.

Such discoveries he makes by accuracy of definition; like science, geometry, or the drawing of intricate patterns. Poetry is the exact definition of the commonplace. Nobody has defined it before in just this way, because a commonplace is never wholly the same for everybody in all circumstances. If the poet would exactly define a night scene according to its meaning for his time, he places Dionysos among the animals; he calls the moon Diana; and all the people know what he means. They acclaim a further contribution to life, a creation or *poiesis*. The shorthand discovers the truth. This is the first stage of realism. Aeschylus used it often.

But, tradition alone, if unconnected with the march of time, carries in its life-blood its own death-germs. Unconnected with the new problems which life throws up as endlessly as a volcano, and taken as if the commonplace were static and unvarying, it becomes a convention. The commonplace turns platitude. And now the living artist, to explain the life of his people, has to interpret their tradition to them, to rediscover it in terms of his own day. Euripides humanises the gods, as Aeschylus had no need to do. Euripides now becomes important as a person, distinct from his people. His comments are his, and not his people's till they are accepted. The poet begins to seem what Shelley called him, the unacknowledged legislator of the world. But he narrows away from the whole people to the men and women he himself has known. If this is the second stage of realism, it is already in peril of being its own opposite, at the mercy of whatever distortion the poet's personal preconceptions incline him to.

The artist is now revolutionary, active against a conventionalised tradition. In so far as popular life itself hinders him, he will probably be a political revolutionary too. If he is a full-living man, he must be. For the sake of the real tradition in process of discovery. That is why so many "revolutionary" artists will protest that they are at heart traditionalists . . . and are called such by the next generation.

But the conventions have a habit of remaining. They can triumph even from their graves. They can conquer the living traditions of other lands and times. The Dionysiac Bull bulges, vine-wreaths and all, from the wall of the Chapter House in anti-pagan Southwell. Diana becomes the pet-name of a red-haired English Queen. Jove, a comic curse in an army of occupation in India. These are no longer traditions, but conventions, limited to a small class of initiates, not intelligible to the whole people. They add tone to something not traditional for the whole people. The classic reference gives "class."

Conventional artists serve these minorities, but though they beautify and add to the classic references, though they codify accurate definitions, and mix in a wheen of common life for novelty and variation (this is the realist in a poet seeking excuses for his master; for all artists are realists in proportion to what made them artists), nevertheless they discover nothing. They create parallel to truth, and not from it. Girls are nymphs. The air is ambient. The back-gardens of Twickenham contain feathered choirs. Not to know the rules excludes you from membership. Not to know life is no transgression. Art has texture and rhythm and technique and perfection and all the enchanting things that fine poets can make; but it no longer satisfies them.

For the poet has his roots in a real tradition, a deep and living one, taught to him in proverb by the tongue of his father, forming his fears and desires from the silences of his mother, and fortified all his years with his spare-time companions. What has played with him as a boy is too strong in his imagination to be bound in classy conventions. For every correct metaphor or

rhyme there are a dozen fiery truths to be recognised by accurate definition; kindled at home, fanned by his daily work, consuming the very words he uses, he cannot smother them.

Yet how can he write for the people? The clans are gone and the people is split in classes. The classic short-hand, the glory of the commonplace, the radiancy of accuracy, mean nothing. The people, frustrated, impoverished, kept ignorant and self-deprecating by a strong class rule, cannot see pictures and do not read poetry. Yet they have the tradition, as he has. Their subconscious minds are conditioned as his is, by folk-lore, legend, the id and od of countless generations of subconscious minds. At this point in history, therefore, the poet finds his, and his people's truth, in these untruths. Realism focuses on the child-like, and the world becomes very wonderful. Now the poet's most treasured possession is his own heart and fancy. His comment may be limited to himself, but it is his own.

Pushkin, Byron, Keats, Shelley, are eager. They die young. We dare not prophesy (especially of Keats, who might have become a dramatist of the first rank) their revolutionary destiny by Wordsworth's. In time, calendars and cheap reprints and the slow vulgarisation of genius that follow, and, because of the shape taken by the industrial age, have to follow, along behind the Reform Bills, now turn that bright poetic childhood into the *sensiblerie* of middle age. Fairies and roses and dewdrops are the only province of the people's poetry in an age of Chartism, aggression, Poor Law guardians, and the ownership of women.

To avoid the platitudinous, the poets do not turn to the "unenlightened" people; they assert originality in themselves. Chaos ensues. Reactions anticipate actions; romantic, realist, classicist, æstheticist, formalist, nationalist, internationalist, and a dozen rival schools flourish at the same time. Individual artists contradict themselves, lacking the stability of public function. A leading rational poet, in whose works the damp souls of housemaids sprout from basements, turns mystic and contemplates leopards on ladies' staircases. A painter

whose early drawings have shown a compassion for oppressed peasants scarcely rivalled in art, abandons humanity for brush-work and colour, and dies in a madhouse. An Irish dramatist, with enough sense to feel the need of popular myth at the beginning of a new national independence, tries to recreate the demi-gods of the Gael as if Dionysos has indeed come to the slums of Dublin.

In an attempt to reconcile these conflicts by exploring their common source, the new psychology is utilised. Reasonable standards, observable reality, are rejected. The subconscious is crowned. A new discovery of tradition this, surely, handed down to us by the silences of both father and mother? The base of our actions and soil of our thoughts, yours, mine, the poet's, the people's? Shapes seen in dreams, as anybody might and does see them. Observation of a kind of reality? Comment of a new sort on a new truth? In time, will not the people recognise and hail the poets of to-day, by then become the poets of yesterday, for their solution of the contemporary problem? Or is this all an escape of a leisured or careless class from problems too uncomfortable to solve?

The artist appears, certainly, to be back in the time of the early artists, with the barriers down between him and the people. But in reality they are not down; they are up. For in early times the artist was making the comment of all the people in his own comment, even where, as in Aeschylus, he was in many ways a rebel. But other people to-day are not back in the time of the early artists. Their comments cannot be his. Their common-places are not his. Outward, everyday problems in their lives demand conscious, not subconscious, solutions. Whatever his comment is, it cannot be contemporary. Indeed he has, in renouncing the conscious, renounced his own comment. His depersonalised art has had its tongue torn out. He cannot, like Shelley, account for Castlereagh or the Revolt of Islam. He must not differentiate man from man. The paradox of art has him in thrall: by freeing himself, he loses the self he freed. The new shapes he discovers are the mere paintings

of averages. In assembling untried combinations of words, he is playing bricks with clichés. Already in his flight from false tradition, he has set up a new, unmalleable, convention.

The trouble with "psychological" art is that it does not go deep enough into psychology, but remains bookish. Any professional psychiatrist would scorn, or condemn, a practitioner who kept his treatment on the subconscious plane alone. No cure goes on, no truth is found, behind an undisturbed Seventh Veil. Only by squaring up the secret withdrawal with the responsibilities of life can any psychic, or any actual, problem be solved.

Now, there is the same mixtie-maxtie of conscious and subconscious in the soul of a people, which is only the sum of the souls of people. Overcrowding, underfeeding, industrial fear, agricultural neglect, and all the other causes of neurosis which prevent us from overcoming the usual disorders incident to weaning, slapping, threats of disapproval, and all the other processes of being trained to be human . . . none of these can be nullified by looking at a surrealist picture or studying an apocalyptic poem. Indeed such causes will operate against the full enjoyment of pictures and poetry, unless these works of art take also into account the causes themselves. Nor will mass art-education do this trick, unless reform at the same time removes them. In other words, this art is for an unknown future society. Our artist has not solved his contemporary problem. He is just as far from his public office, just as blind to tradition, as the most academic and be-lettered conventionalist. He is worse. He has created a convention not of the past, but of the future.

How can any contemporary artist, faced with psychological knowledge on the one side and social conditions on the other, fail to create such a still-born convention? Only by taking account of both sides. There is only one clue I know of that he can lay hold on. That lies in individual human beings, for they are made such by both sides. And they are the only possible material for him, that is so made.

The individual human being can develop himself to

some degree; other people can develop him to a greater degree; but the greatest part of his individuality comes from his "character." Now character is a partly reasoned summation of reason and non-reason, the first shape of which shows in childhood from whatever made the child's parents' characters, and their parents' before them, and theirs before them, away back maybe to the Bull men. Views, experiences, dogmas, and doubts, have altered them down the centuries; but there is a basic stock of character which is kept alive in the generations by the habits of the community. A person, as the intelligent John Grierson has remarked, may be a person in public as well as a person in private. This is where nationality cuts across international fashion, and the people across the individual. Scots, for example, to-day make no better cricketers than their ancestors made archers; but in football they follow hand-to-hand fighting. Conversely, a Scot tends to be either a strong whisky drinker or a dogmatic teetotaller; but in either case he is logical about it. Even the Highlander has a subtle logic that the Lowlander mistakes for opportunism. So nationality is one of the strongest components in making an individual. Even the rebels who reject their nationality, are formed by it.

Now the artist facing this question of the uniqueness of any human being is far happier in a nationally-aware country than in any other: Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Walt Whitman, Burns (not that any of them are sure at once of a tremendous welcome. Aeschylus, for all his public function, was twice in danger of extreme penalties for the very uncompromising truth of his art; and no artist in any land should complacently assume security because he is trying to work for the people!). Burns indeed is a fine example. Working away from the false classicism of his day, he rediscovered his tradition not in the romantic imagination, but in his own language; and was thereby able to unite reality of observation with a deadly accuracy of word. He rediscovered the commonplace in, for instance, *Ae Fond Kiss*, as Shakespeare did in *Prithee undo this button!* but no one can call either platitudinous. Some of the place-names in Burns' songs

ring with the homely clan-call of Dionysos and Diana; a geographical, for a historical, shorthand: because he loved Scotland as he loved his fellow-men and women, and as those men and women loved her.

The Scots were, and are, an easier people for a Scottish poet than the English are for an English poet. There is more genuine national feeling here. A national feeling which, like the best nationalisms, is part sentiment and part necessity for work. The encroachments of large international concerns, mostly English; the centralisation of government at a great distance without any compensating knowledge of local conditions and little consultation of the governed by permanent civil servants¹; the recent deliberate frustration of Scottish enterprise and encouragement of the transfer of factories to England, which is not yet wholly reversed by the People's government; the ignoring of certain grievances, prejudices and habits; these and many other things make it daily more and more difficult to carry on work in Scotland, whether that work is skilled labour, a private business, co-operative enterprise, or a branch of a Government office. Many thousands of small business people, and many hundreds of thousands of workers, regard Home Rule at least as a possible if partial solution. The workers, millions of whom speak a different language from anything across the border, and whose food, customs, and interests are foreign by English standards, have very little affection for the English, and a very great regard for Scottish traditions whether live, dead, or moribund.

Nor is poetry so avoided by the masses as it is in England. Burns is quoted on the job with a real understanding in circles dubbed uncultured (as in other respects they may be) by the middle class. In Highland, Island, and certain Glasgow Gaelic homes a good poem is as welcome as a good song or an eightsome. The poet who can touch a fellow-Scot as an individual, both in his conscious and subconscious minds, is pretty sure of a welcome. Not perhaps on the Walter Scott scale; those days are gone, and have not yet returned. But

¹ Herring curing can be stopped arbitrarily in the height of the season, for example, on the ukase of a paper prefect, who may be anything from a Uriah Heep to a retired major-general.

ultimately. And there are poets active in Scotland to-day who embrace in their mental view both psychology and politics, without being either surrealists or poetic statisticians. They have the guts to attempt the commonplace without falling into a platitude. It is perhaps significant that the same process is to be seen in the poetry of Soviet Russia.

Most of our poets are politically on the left. Chief of them is Hugh MacDiarmid, a figure of considerable intellectual stature, with a great range of poetic form. In some exquisite Scots lyrics, like *The Watergaw* there is such an intense, economic, and accurate use of words as to be almost magical. In most of them humanity is studied realistically and with deep feeling. In many even the cosmos becomes personal. In his longer, free-verse, Pound-like English poems, learning, philosophy, history, philology, public affairs, and many languages and literatures pour forth like a cataract. I find in this side of MacDiarmid the broad knowledge that has fitted so many Scots to manage Empires and lead professions and sciences; always with this same sense of humanity and respect for its dignity and compassion on its shortcomings. But he is no individualist, for all his rugged domination; he is an active rebel, Socialist (his hymns to Lenin are outstanding), politically Nationalist, and patriot, whose deep love of his people makes self-advancement in material matters a thing of no interest to him, just as his uncompromising habits make it impossible anyway.

Second to him in importance I would place Douglas Young, another picturesque figure, and again, like MacDiarmid eager in public affairs, patriotic, rebellious, learned, linguistic, with power and grace in his Scots poems. Like MacDiarmid, too, he does not limit his "dialect" poems to spoken Scots, but includes many words from the past, as Burns did, and with the same rich accuracy. Neither is obscure, though the encyclopaedic knowledge of both demands study. Young, I would say, though (he would say, because) a prominent and active Nationalist, has an international outlook which is much more frequent in Scotland than it is in England.

Beside these giants is a whole poetic generation of no mean talent. They group in many schools. Even those whose forms derive from Paris or London or India set Cairngorms in their gold-work, surrealist, apocalyptic, mythic, or whatever. There are William Montgomerie and the late William Jeffery, both in different ways rediscovering tradition in their experiments. There are the sensitive talents of Robert MacLellan and George Campbell Hay writing in Scots. There is Maurice Lindsay, leader of the young, whose *Jock, the Laird's Brother* is an epitome, in rhythms, images, and meaning, of all that the new Scottish poetry stands for; it may one day be ranked among the very best of its time.

All these are poets of the Lowlands or cities. Even their love lyrics are born of the industrial belt, with its alternations of chimneys and trees. But the Highlands, too, have their share in this revival, apart from poems of the above writers inspired by visits to the countryside.

Writing in English, George Bruce and Adam Drinan from the East Coast and the West respectively, rediscover the traditions of their peoples in a new style that is simple, accurate, vivid, and deep. George Bruce's output at the moment is small, but he is always alive and compelling. The fisher life of the Moray Firth, where he was born, has not been overlaid by subsequent "education." His terse bright lines rely on truth more than delicate rhythm for their effect. Drinan is more graceful. He explores such relics of Celtic forms and rhythms as have survived the onslaught of the Presbyterian Church. But he is also a Marxist, and his awareness of to-day never allows him any indulgence in Celtic Twilights. He has a faculty for translating into poetry the light, colour, people, and living conditions of the Islands and the West Coast; and it is significant that his poems, as I am told, have been read to and approved by Kintyre fishermen. Also significant is the rumour that his forthcoming volume of poems is about the London blitz.

Lastly, and perhaps more than all the others entitled to the word genius, there is Sorley MacLean from the Isle of Skye. Writing exclusively in Gaelic, and scorning

with a savagery that is found in many ancient Gaelic poets any ignorant affections of outward nationalism, or anything else, but deeply, deeply patriotic, he also is a Marxist. He maintains in long poems and short lyrics alike that continuum of forcible simplicity and keen observation (as keen in his case for the rags and cruelty of a Glasgow tenement as for the moon or the fauna of the Isles), which is quite unknown to English literary critics but has in fact lasted almost unbroken from the days of Alastair MacMhaistir Alastair, or Duncan Ban MacIntyre, or Mary MacLeod, or beyond. This tradition is no more out of touch with the events of to-day than it has ever been out of touch with the events of any day. It is greatly and communally realistic.

Even the remote Hebrides are thus brought into the new tradition of Scottish art. It would be an overstatement to say that all Hebrideans are aware of what is coming to them. But they have their own traditions, still very far from being conventions. Their culture has overflowed the sea, and subsists in patches of industrial Scotland. It is primarily a non-written literature. Annie Johnston and Donald Campbell are teachers in Barra and Eriskay; Margaret MacInnes is a teacher in Glasgow; James MacPhee (from Ballachulish) and James M. C. Campbell are London business men. But they can all sing (in exquisite island peasant style, which is natural to them, and learned in their own original homes), songs in Gaelic which may either have come down orally from the Dark Ages or may have been written by a janitor in Glasgow, or by a native of Mull. And the themes of such songs are realistic. Even if they, or something like them, were first begun by the Bull men, their primitiveness is a kind of historical realism, and not that of Stravinsky. If they are modern, they go back to no nostalgic simple life, although there is, of course, a tendency to remember the Minch and the machair as an escape from the black stones of Glasgow. They are rather the outcome of something that has affected the whole Gaelic community, the sinking of a ship, the death of a Gael. Sometimes they have new words fitted to an old tune which has survived naked, so to speak, having

lost its words; sometimes both words and tune are the new invention of the singer.

This Gaelic culture is often said to be dying, as Gaelic is said to be dying out. Nothing could be further from the truth. The numbers of Gaelic speakers have certainly dwindled since the clearances of the last century. English educational methods have done their best (by official decree) to kill Gaelic: at first forbidding it in schools, then allowing it as a set subject, like Latin, or any other dead language. But Gaelic is too precious to the Gael for English officials to kill it. As long as it is spoken by the father, as long as it is implicit in the silence of the mother, the child will speak it on his way home from school. In the Highlands many hundreds of middle-aged folk begin to learn it each year. Mods and Gatherings by clans or districts in towns and cities encourage it. Most surprising of all, a group of young Glasgow workers, anxious to explore Scotland in their free time, have found the necessity of learning not only Gaelic but also Highland pastimes and history; and have formed an association for the purpose. This is not fostered by anyone, but is quite organic to their situation as Glasgow workers with an interest in their own land. Their numbers are growing every month, and their studies are lively and wide. I have no doubt that before many years have elapsed, this Gaelic culture will have taken its written form more widely than at present; magazines and books will have a greater circulation; and so it will be recognised by the English critics as constituting a real national culture, as it would have been recognised long ago if those whose administer the "United" Kingdom had solved the national problems of our federation as the Stalin method solves those of the Soviet. For here tradition has not yet split away from life, and there is no need yet for the Gaels to rediscover it.

With the other parts of Scotland it is otherwise. If I had to describe any common quality of the varied poets serving her to-day, I would say they were establishing a new sort of Classicism. It has the classic quality of accurate definition, possible from the wide vocabulary of Lowland Scots (Scots has over fifty words for describing

different gaits), or from the subtle allusions and technique of Gaelic verse. It is contemporary, in that it is not bound by rules for the delectation of the initiated. It embraces both modern psychology and modern politics. It is positive and realistic in its approach to humanity, upon which it centres. When Drinan writes of the Clearances, he is aware of Fascist Germany; and when MacDiarmid or Young or MacLean sing of mountains, they do not forget the slums. Nor are any of them limited to mountains and slums. They are in action, practically, in their own lives, for a better Scotland and a freed Scottish people, freed from any oppression, capitalistic, English or Scottish. They are the Scottish people; and the Scottish people are people of the world.

SIX LOVE POEMS

Adam Drinan

I

YOU IN ME

IN the saucht of lapis night I dream of you;
at swiff of moonstone day I ficher for you.
Sober or drunk, filled is my bed with you;
busy or lazy, banded my head by you.

The five greens of Strathoogie
show not more rich than I.

To bell-trill and phone-jang prick-eared for you,
in soap-scent and room-scent sniffing for you,
country and town ranging, pointing, searching for you,
to find our whole land a castle worthy of you;

the six towers of West George Street
stand not more direct than I.

Straight in my spine upstands the straightness of yours;
great strule my thoughts on the spate of yours.
Firm is my will fixed to the calm tedder of you.
Clear peer my eyes through the honesty of yours.

The Seven Wonders of the World
were never as strange as I.

II

MAY ON DRUMMOSSIE RIDGE

You bursting whins of Culloden
erupt your old-gold blood !

Under your cloudless heaven
my heart sinks in your flood.

In yon blue emptiness, somewhere
with bottomless light around
invisible she flies eastward.

Back float her thoughts to ground.

Only when I can sain her
because I understand,
will words of mine be worthy
my crushed arising land.

III

SUNLIGHT IN SHADOW

BLACK squashed houses lie in the path.
As I pass forward
a squat black shadow passes in them,
shameless, without shoulder-glance,
my flat black shadow, myself
seen by the sun.

How can I know what he has been doing in there ?
I am only certain
how he must pass in if I pass forward;
for he, being because I am,
is a part of me out of control.
I cannot slide.

Lay black ironed women in a layered bed ?
What hands of black paper
speeled across and into bottles of grey liquor ?
What music of monotone
from monochrome tartan bagpipes, played
by jet silhouettes ?

Or did he plot impalpable intrigues
at a desk of two dimensions ?
melting sheet enemies into gelatinous failure,
laminate his friends
for greed or merriment, himself may be
knighting for life ?

Black squashed houses in the path.

White flaps the sunlight.

I have lived in shadow. I have loved a shadow.
Now I pass on,
stretching in the warmth of the very sun
that showed the shade.

IV

SPEECH IN SILENCE

So often and so often at my street corner
the deaf mutes gather and converse.
Flicker of fingers in noiseless knitting.
The Question. The Answer. The Tale.
Gay broad silent smiles on them.
Cheerful nodding good-byes from them.

So often and so often at the conference table
I redd up my love, and my remorse.
Rattle of minutes loose in the clock-case.
The Deafness. The Dumbness. The Past.
A gay trained social laugh on me.
A cheerful healthy hand-clasp from me.

V

TELEPHONE

ENVY is on me to your telephone,
perched on its ledge,
trilling like a black canary
in an invisible cage;
for your voice will take it up
and your quietness lay it down,
and the caver of your spirit
rumble the raik of the town.

Pity is on me to your telephone,
captive on its ledge,
drumlie as an autumn merle
laichening in a hedge;
for it trilled and it thrilled
till whisht it waits.
A fuff on a black scrog.
You came in too late.

VI

LESSONS

THREE treacheries now I understand
the committing which turns a boy into a man:
 the treachery of the eye
that goes out on a wish and comes in on a vision;
 the treachery of the mind
that goes in on a fear and comes out as a conviction;
 and the treachery of the heart
hunting for two reassurances when it has one only love.
And three loyalties now I can be putting to them,
the enduring which turns a girl into a woman:
 the loyalty of the body
when it is tortured by indignity and rejection;
 the loyalty of the will
crushed by doubt, jealousy, and suppression;
 and the loyalty of the self
eternal as its volcanoes under it and its lightnings above.

WORK GOES BELOW

Geoffrey Moore

No lacklove, love, but proved
A hoverer, fearful that
The waters ever should be closed
Above my scallop-shell of quiet.

But now that it has foundered, divers drop,
The lines web downwards,
Grapple-devils finger round the hulk.
The calm above deceives; work goes below.

VALLEY OF WALES

B. L. Coombes

A LORRY stands on the roadway outside our isolated home. The road gang which travels in it should have been on their way home at this time in the afternoon, but, instead, five of them are sitting in our porch whilst the sixth walks amongst the roses and maintains a needless watch along the road. The five men are almost silent, each with a sheet of notepaper and a pencil ready. They are poised and most intent, for the radio is broadcasting the male voice choirs competition from the National Eisteddfod of Wales. When each choir finishes, the road-workers grunt their appreciation and total up their points before the next choir starts. They comment:

“Basses were better than the last choir.”

“Tenors were forcing it too much.”

“Lovely blending when they settled down after the start. That choir’ll get it, you watch.”

They are impatient at the short speeches between each singing, and watch our clock continually in the hope that the contest will be complete before the programme changes. They are unlucky, for the change comes half-way through the singing of the last choir, and a mutter of disgust spreads amongst them at the blasphemy of the B.B.C. in daring to cut into that programme. They fold their notes after an animated comparison, assure us they will call on the morrow to compare their ideas with the adjudicators’ report in the morning paper, then travel away to their homes.

Their interest was deep-rooted; not one moved or spoke during the singing, and they sat with eyes watching the evening sky as if they sought to see over the mountains to that pavilion at Mountain Ash. They agreed that their National Eisteddfod had slipped a little out of focus and was dominated by schoolmasters or ministers of religion, but they also argued that the people singing were their own folk and lived always near to labour as they did.

Singing has certainly resumed its pre-war fervour in

this land of holes below the ground and black mounds above. It is not correct to count it as a racial characteristic of the Welsh, because usually more than half the numbers in the choirs are English—I mean those who have not been more than one or two generations away from the larger land over the border. Had these folk stayed in their own land it is doubtful if they would have given any thought to choral singing, but here they have merged with the natives and lost their self-consciousness. Frequently they sing Welsh songs, getting the tune right even when they stumble over the wording. Yet it is in the mass that they sing, and first-class soloists in our land are as rare as fine days in this weeping summer.

Almost every evening about six o'clock a drum thuds down in the valley. After the third beat the sound of a marching song comes up to us. The side-drums rattle and the big drum echoes the tramp of marching feet, for one of the carnival bands has started its parade. Male bands, girls' bands, mixed bands, children's bands, even the smallest mining village has one of each; and what rivalry is shown as they march stiffly past each other and the drum-major struts in front. Almost every weekend there is a competition at some centre or other and the bands depart amazingly good-humouredly and fantastically dressed. Late at night their united singing informs us of their return and we judge whether they won or lost by the nature of the tune.

On Bank Holidays we have the Sunday School marches. On these days the religious bodies—and they are many and varied in this land where both Welsh and English are spoken—forget their arguments and travel along the same road amicably. Every one, the very old and the tiny tots, joins in the march, or perhaps I had better describe it as a saunter. The aged claim their right to the front ranks, so the pace is very leisurely. The bands are kept in the middle of the procession to avoid a repetition of one year when the bands arrived back at least three streets in front of the marchers. Each Sunday School follows its own banner. These are usually lovely things which have been handed along through the generations and are well guarded. They are made of

silk, with a verse of some hymn worked on them by hand. The children in their coloured dresses look like a moving mass of flowers and the continual singing of hymns sends their melody up from the narrow valley to the high slopes of the mountains which have brooded over the doings in the valleys below during the periods of lock-out, unemployment, and frustrated hope.

More definitely than singing, drama has stirred to a vibrant life in our areas. Each considerable town has its Little Theatre, with energetic and active members. Neath, Aberdare, and Swansea are local examples. As for the smaller villages—some years ago drama was counted as a hobby of the devil and its training as a guarantee of eternal damnation. Now each small chapel has its dramatic society either in Welsh or English. One company I know at Resolven has won high dramatic honours by acting plays in both Welsh and English. Every fair-sized village in this area holds its drama week, during which visiting companies act a different play each night of the week and the adjudicator awards the considerable cash prizes for the best acting. Audiences are good throughout the week and reach a crescendo of enthusiasm on the Saturday night when the criticisms are listened to in an atmosphere of rapt interest. The usual method is to book a seat for the week by paying instalments to the various collectors. *Tobias and the Angels* or *Lady Precious Stream* seem to be favourites, yet Shaw and Galsworthy have their supporting companies. Ystradgynlais, just a mining village, is fast developing into a centre for culture, for they have a fine dramatic society there which has featured a play by a local school-master named Horace Morgan. This play is *Out of the Dust*, and deals with the effect of silicosis on the lives of mining people. It can be argued that there is an old-fashioned flavour about the play, but it portrays very forcibly the tragedies of the folk who live and die amongst dust. It is about the only play written in South Wales that does deal clearly and correctly with the lives of its industrial people—as far as I have seen.

Ystradgynlais has also become the home of a Czech artist who has settled down to illustrate the lives of the

miners. He should have a good influence on the many who are trying—without his background of training—to picture our lives. Frequently I see miners, with their faces shining after the pit-head bath, carrying their pencil case and sketching board as they hurry off towards some gorge or cliff which has stirred their ideas; and the photographers are numerous. Not half-hearted enthusiasts either, they are men who study their hobby and will spend all they can spare on good material. They hold their own competitions and little exhibitions. Whenever I need illustrators for a magazine article I am embarrassed by an overdose of photographs and camera-men.

I was recently at the founding of a new dramatic society in a village which already has four such societies. There were over a hundred present, mostly young people, and although the majority were not well experienced in drama, there was an insistent demand that the first production should be Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Certainly they had confidence. The Old Vic Company has completed several tours through South Wales, and has left a host of friends waiting for the next visit. Sybil Thorndyke has stated in a broadcast talk that her best audiences were in the mining villages. In the present season Unity Theatre has sent a company to tour this area. They are doing *Golden Boy*, and the folk here will certainly realise what mental torture damaged hands can be to a young artist, for the mine and the tin works have maimed many craftsmen.

As an instance of the intense study of culture in our mining valleys I want you to consider one local village of about six thousand inhabitants. A grey village, with twisted streets, loaded with a coating of dust which falls continually, and named Resolven. From that village have come during this last thirty years, five Doctors of Music, two University lecturers, a crowned bard at the National Eisteddfod, a choir which went overseas on a tour, and one of the finest dramatic societies in the country.

Last Friday I noticed a crowd of, surely, three hundred children waiting outside the miners' hall. Not for a picture, as I first supposed, but to change their library books. During the evenings the adults also have their book queues and crushes. A section prefers Westerns or

thrillers, but there is a strong reading support for historical fiction and serious novels or autobiographies. Wales is book-hungry; and although the Miners' Welfare and the other libraries are easing the clamour the demand is for more and more books. I wonder they do not try travelling libraries.

Orchestral music is our weak point. We have plenty of dance bands but few good orchestras. Nor have we many good instrumental soloists, but I know of at least two men who search the country for suitable wood from which they make violins—good both to play and to look at. They are both real craftsmen, giving months of their spare time to the creation of a fine instrument. Brass bands and their music flourish, probably because they come more before the public than orchestras. Each village has its brass band and usually they get their main support from the miners who pay a weekly deduction towards the upkeep of the band. The three-shift system handicaps any kind of team practice, as there is no surety what hours the men may be working on different weeks. One popular hobby is the making of walking sticks from selected stems in the woods and also making smoking pipes. Some miners get quite a nice spare income that way.

When industry came to these valleys the hill farms were deserted and our culture lost some of its greatest assets. In those lonely homes during the winter evenings singing and instrumental playing, and elocution, were developed. We have missed those hill farms and the sturdy folk who lived in and by them. Once again, our folk are starting back on the mountain lands, building themselves bungalows and creating cultivated land above the dusty villages. Possibly the arrival of wireless will check any revival of the old folk-singing and playing, but it is too early to predict as yet.

When homes were needed for the invading workers, the colliery owners rushed up the rows of grey homes out of the stone, which was plentiful. Small houses they usually were, and very many streets of one-storied houses are still inhabited. The owners guessed that such homes would force men to seek comfort in the public

houses, and so they made sure that such public houses were commodious and imposing affairs. Until the coming of good transport these were the only relaxation—apart from religion—which our long winters permitted. After a straining game of Rugby football, often played in teeming rain, the players and visitors finish their day in song or argument at the public house. The quality and quantity of beer has lately not warmed the discussions much, but late Saturday night in our public house sees a meeting of all workers and business men, even to the doctors and schoolmasters, all definitely and continually putting the world right and faulting the decisions of those who make them far away over the mountains in Westminster. Certainly we are feeling changes, the coal under our feet belongs to the nation, the mine engines which pant their exertions and blow their steamy breath over our homes are also going to the nation, but, except for a feeling of greater security, life goes on in much the same way in our villages. In one of the smallest and quietest rooms at the back of the inn a group of ageing Welshmen—the Cymrodorion—discuss in their own language a passage from the Bible or a verse from the work of some Welsh poet.

So on the Saturday evening an old miner, with his hands curved in a continual grip wrought by forty years of mandrel-holding, stands amongst a group of his old mates and argues about the Virgin Birth. In the next room the two doctors, at last free from the crowded surgery, have ordered their second glass of stout and are opposing their theoretical opinions of dust-suppression to the practical knowledge of the men who swallow that pit-dust every day. In yet another room the Rugby football team replay, vocally, their match of the afternoon.

Outside, two majestic policemen, for they make sure they are big in colliery areas, shelter impatiently near the entrance as they await closing time and a possible need for their tact or strength. A light in the church shows that the finishing touches are being given to the harvest festival settings; and another in the study of the Baptist minister shows a shadow pacing back and forth as he rehearses his sermon for the morrow and marks

the points where, by rising voice and emphatic wording, he can bring out the inspired *hwyl*.

Higher up on the mountainside lonely lights mark the homes of the hill-farmers, those outposts that have been the cradles of all that is sturdy in our Welsh culture. To-night, many of them must be wondering if they can survive this disastrous summer, or if they will be forced to take their families and their living into the crowded valleys away from all the things which call so insistently to their rugged natures.

Late Summer, 1946.

THE PACKMAN: A CUMBRIAN SONG

Jonathan Denwood

THEER com a packman tull oor hoose—
A lad ta suit my mind;
He gev ta me a fine silk bloose,
An, wow, but he was kind;
He dantled me upon his knee,
He did it many a time;
What else tean pleace 'tween him an me
Ah cannat think a crime.

*Hey, my jolly, ho, my jolly,
Hey, my jolly packman;
He dantled me upon his knee,
My jolly, jolly packman.*

'Twas Martinmas an noo it's spring;
An summer seun shall pass,
Then hey, but what will t'autumn bring
For t'packman and his lass ?
My guileless heart he did trepan;
An t'ould wives hev ne doots:
When t'packman cuhs his roond agean
Ah'll want some babby cloots.

PARASITES WITHOUT POWER

Leslie Daiken

THE PICTURESQUE FORMULA

IT was Mario Praz in his remarkable book of essays, *Unromantic Spain*, who first scientifically demolished the *formule pittoresque* of Gautier¹ and the other European Romantics whose exploitation of the "sunny South" in literature led to a rubberneck mentality and a Cook's tour guidebook style.

Le sang, la volupté et le mort has its equivalent among ourselves in vagabond-focussing. A species of modern artist still turns from his immediate social gamut in search of "the queer type" for his quarry. This appeal of raggle-taggle usually reflects the search for something exotic in a dreary climate. It centres around the magic of camp-fires, fortune-telling, wild earth, flashing eyes, sallow skin, folk-expressions, sly relationships; but baulks at fleas, chicanery, and plain dirt. In Britain it is a hangover from Borrowism, and is in quality, patronising. Laura Knight's circus studies, Elinor Smith's gipsy novels, concert-hall refinements of ballads are middle-class idealisations of a fascination that glorifies the outcast in art, but spurns and spits on him in reality. Half the myths of baby-stealing and the *motifs* worked around the concept of a passionate gipsy lover probably arose from complex processes to negate and to cancel what in reality holds a powerful physical attraction for some females in the virility of the vagabond type.

With their possibilities of unusualness, nomadism, and nonconformity, such vagrant characters as gipsies, show-people, circuses, bargees, poachers, and tramps attract the artist-bohemian who lives under a slated roof, and

¹"When Gautier was preaching the gospel of picturesque Spain and giving the finishing touch to the picture in which Mérimée, Musset, and Hugo had collaborated, when he was making of Granada the mecca of Romanticism, he knew very well, the sportive Parisian tourist, that he was faking a mannered Spain. . . . Unfortunately his readers took long-haired monocled Theo very seriously." (Knopf, 1929.)

who at the heel of the hunt goes home to his bathroom and electric lamp. And so in Ireland our Abbey peasant-play now includes a foxy tinker as a stock type, together with the land-hungry mountainy farmer, the half-witted herd, the garrulous nosey-parker, and the psychic servant-girl.

Irish respectability takes the tinker breed no closer to its bosom than does rural England the *posrates*, yet there seems to be less self-consciousness on the part of tinkers—who are integrated within country communities, than is the case in developed England. The same is probably true of South Wales where villagers are known to rally round convicted travellers and pay fines imposed for poaching! Such proximity of the bands to ordinary folk means that outsiders (who are not suspect) have got inside the circumference of tinker life. Sociable contact is seldom, if ever, made, but impact does occur. The best research amid a clatter of invented rubbish was John Sampson's *Tinkers and Their Talk*. Nothing outside its philological and etymological field has appeared since 1890. "The tinkers or 'tincards' (cf. Gaelic *ceard*)," he said, "are in Ireland as distinct a *caste* as our English gipsies." We have also his field-work to thank for a record of the principal family names as follows (prior to 1890, that is):

IN ULMSTER: *Kane, Barlow, Murray, Banks, Dunley, Watson, Latham, and M'Allister*. IN LEINSTER: *Connor, Mackay, Hynes, Norris, Keegan, and Costello*. IN CONNAUGHT: *M'Dunnagh, Joyce, Mulholland, Riley, Gallaher, Simons, Dyer, Cawley, Fury, and Creenie*. IN MUNSTER: *Donovan, M'Dunnagh, Mangan, Carty, Comeford, Shinehan, and Rooney*.

In Spain, poets and musicians have given to and taken from the folk-art of the *gitanos espagnoles*, as indeed in other European countries a social reciprocity took place on the part of the intellectuals. In Ireland an attempt at realistic treatment certainly did take place, but seldom, except for Synge's anecdotes, was it factual. The foremost Gaelic prose-writer, Padraic O'Connaire, himself a *picaro* at heart, took to the roads with ass and cart at one phase of his career, and must have got pretty

close to them at times. But he has left us little evidence in his published writings. Liam O'Flaherty has written about tinkers; but with him one feels that he has grafted low-life episodes on synthetic root—for dramatic effect. To a fictionist any robust situation is fair game for spot-lighting. And few Irish artists can resist the pathos and the poetry of travelling men on the move.

REVILED AND REJECTED

In central and south-eastern European countries, it is largely known that although the gipsy communities were recognised minority groups, they were never allowed to assimilate. Like the Jews in some regions, they became the reflectors and tone-arms of local idiom and folk-music. Tormented by the Nazis they were finally annihilated, and it is not so widely known that in Rumania, Hungary, Poland, Ruthenia, and other countries, there remains not even a remnant to tell the terrible story. The world still awaits the novelist who will deal with this grim and unpublicised tragedy. How ironical sound the words to-day that Leland, that doughty scholar and preserver of Romany lore, wrote¹ in 1873:

"The parallel of the gipsies to the Jews is most apparent. All over the world this black and God-wanting shadow dances behind the solid of 'The people,' affording proof that if the latter can be preserved, even in the wildest wanderings, to illustrate Holy Writ—so can gipsydom—for no apparent purpose whatever. And yet they both live—the sad and sober Jew, the gay and tipsey gipsy"

Just as the zigeuner proper inspired a score of variants in the world's languages, both laudatory and defamatory, so this pariah of a new democracy in Eire, prides himself on a like attention from society. Urbane ladies who know of him only from books or hearsay, exclaiming "Oh, most interesting—how very interesting," might refer to his ilk as *tinmen*—a term as remote from his vocabulary or ears as the word *book-maker* from the lips of a tic-tac man! His own sort he alludes to simply as *Travellers*, or *Thravelling Men*. *Tinker* he doesn't

¹ *English Gipsies and Their Language*: C. E. Leland.

relish since it involves a Gentile usage, and in its normal association carries the ordinary citizen's surprise and derision. A term still more scathing is *tinker-tramp*, or *old tramp-tinker*, uttered by those who, at the sight of his rattling cart will curse, and rush to fortify their barns or hen-runs and whistle their watchdogs in from the fields.

The men, in so far as they go in for any set trade, inherit an interest in the making of tin-cans that they share with remnants of present-day Romanies. These, their women-folk peddled. And up and down the country, to this day, are a few skilled workers in tin who remain real craftsmen at their job.

Synge's lusty tinker wench, wheedling a marriage promise out of a country priest puts these words in her speech:

"It's a fine can, your reverence, for if it's poor, simple folk we are, its fine cans we can make and himself, God help him, is a great man surely at the trade."

Sampson tells how one woman would engage a simple farmer's wife "by reciting charms and lucky spells, while another beats a large brass pan or kettle. Meanwhile a third will rob the house from the back."

"Tossing cups" was another favourite fortune-telling method followed by the women—before tea-rationing arrived, of course. The tea-leaves are brewed in a can and divination practised through the shape which the tea-leaves take, on the bottom and sides—a very popular superstition widespread even nowadays.

Hawking plants and ferns in pots was another pre-war occupation and Leland first noted the phrase "shelkin' gallopas" as probably being the origin of the word *Shelta*—a corruption of *Shelkin*—slang or hawkers' lingo. On this enterprise in North Wicklow, Synge recalls that:

"If their sales are successful, both men and women drink heavily; so that they are always on the edge of starvation, poorly dressed, the women sometimes wearing nothing but an old petticoat and shawl—a scantiness of clothing that is sometimes met with also among the road-women of Kerry."

Selling clothes-pegs, hand-made from peeled willow, is another: baskets used to be wrought from osiers and rushes, but latterly were shop-acquired as often as not. Fortune-telling usually followed the offering for sale of trinkets, ribbons, shoe-laces, studs, as seasonal sidelines, knocking door-to-door in the towns.

But a rising generation and changing modernity have diverted many a lazy tinsmith from precarious picking and stealing towards better money-making lines. Though begging is still a real auxiliary, and the worth of children is measured by what they bring in coins. Kids are schooled from the age of four in the planned cadge technique, as intensively as a chain-store novice is primed with lectures on the psychology of the planned sale!

Illiteracy is paramount, and primary schooling given not at all, though no official surveys by the education authorities have brought to light any figures. Animals are in the background, always. In rural Ireland, poultry, game, and livestock were easily come by. And so, the acquisition of mares, she-asses, greyhound-bitches, became capital assets. Charles Duff mentions that on the Aran Isles he met tinkers from the mainland. They had crossed the ocean to buy calves and island colts, and traded amicably with the natives. Fairs are their open stock exchanges, and these are seldom missed.

Came the war years when even the price for an old donkey, mule, or gennet, soared. Horses and asses were sold at a good profit. But war brought rationing, too. Even bacon and butter got scarce in Ireland. Hungry farms sent lads and girls to labour in Britain's factories and airfields, so that Bank of England notes would come every week from the emigrants to keep the bite in the place, and the home fires burning. Small wonder that the country people looked daggers at the prospering travellers, grudging them their earnings by the "world-owes-me-a-living" method. "Living off the country, 'they are,'" is how farmers would express their grievance.

No taxes, no commitments, no ground rent, no stabling expenses, no overheads, fees, church dues, nor liabilities other than bad debts. "The long acre," as wayside grazing is called, was a road with many turnings.

And so the tinkers rattled along from county to county, piling on to their two-wheeled carts such oddments as rags, waste-metal, bottles, jars, wood-blocks—since pots and pans were nowadays at a premium. Chickens, turkeys, and—in one instance—a few ewes, changed hands overtly.

And, of course, goats.

The goat trade has its own fantastic story. I remember going off one June week to investigate its technicalities. We drove from the lazy pastures of County Tipperary to the rocks of County Clare, and then northward to the dusty village of Gort, in Galway, which sucks the Atlantic. My fully documented discoveries would make weird reading. This was the eve of the horse-meat era in England. Menaced by U-boats, with austerity switching to acute shortage, any kind of food was acceptable. Rabbits were rising on the market, and deemed a luxury in London. And so, some imaginative civil servant (or racketeering genius?) initiated a new source of supplies. He saw in the wild-goat herds of Eireann a rich possibility for sending flesh to the canneries, and additional meat meals to the canteens, of "merrie Englande"! In this traffic your tinkers became astute middlemen, and during the slaughter boom, many a reigning billy-goat was pressed at dusk into a tinker's cart for sacrifice, its carcase to be sold to the "agent" at a good price in hard cash. Some were shipped live-weight; others stitched-up in sacking, dead-weight—or as they locally call it, "paunched and packed for the journey." Truly it was good money for old goat—for the tender kids found their way on to the camp pot-hook.

A post-war commerce still flourishes, for I noticed in Easter, 1946, while waiting for the Liverpool boat, twenty pairs of horns and hooves peeping out from under sackcloth bales lying alongside, at Belfast wharf.

From a tinker's angle, unfenced territory is anybody's; but proprietary rights attach to some common-lands and fair-green sites, by the force of custom. Migrations, in the main, are restricted to defined regions. Approved routes (rowts) are travelled at arranged seasons, all year round, regulated more by climate, expediency, and

forage than by any set time-table. But periodically, gala hostings are organised at fixed headquarters. Caravanserai journey along selected byways, so as to reach particular market-centres on fair days. Peak gatherings take place for Puck Fair (Co. Kerry) in mid-August; for Galway Race Meeting Week, in July; and for Ballinasloe Horse and Cattle Market, in late autumn. The latter is a County Galway junction point, as indeed are special towns in the south-west. Itineraries criss-cross, just as provincial families intermingle and mate.

The tribes east of the Shannon seem to have a road network that links up Wexford in the south with the Midlands and Dundalk (northerly), through County Wicklow (a famous tinker territory), and Dublin County itself. In his play, Synge specifically mentions this communication line:

"Wouldn't you easy get a pound with your selling asses, and making cans, and your stealing east and west in Wicklow, and Wexford, and the County Meath?"

And: "It's at the dawn of day I do be thinking I'd have a right to be going off to the *rich* tinkers to be travelling from Tibbradden to Tara Hill . . ."

Several facial types occur in what must now be the most mongrel grouping indigenous to these islands. And pride of breed invests the older families. In Clare-Galway you will see the Spanish type sticking out a mile. In the eastern parts you may come upon stunted dark-faced types. In most areas you will find a lean figure of a man with the clear blue eyes of the Dane or the flaxen hair of the Saxon—and the occasional red-haired man or girl with freckled skin and half-shut eyelids. On the roads of Leinster I noticed mostly a nondescript type: the women with mouse-grey, matted wispy hair, black-shawled, and babies at the breast, in all weathers.

Feeding for animals costs not a copper, as long as grass grows in ditches and haystacks are not barb-wired. A professional parasite has got to know all the angles—when living may literally be a day-to-day struggle to keep his dependants alive. Customary signs are witness to a camp having been, and passed on its way. The "spoor" consists of littered straw or bracken, a patch of

burnt grass with embers, old tatters, broken bottles, papers, wood-shavings, manure—and still more manure.

Town communities usually force caravan encampments to keep to the outskirts. Yet, about ten years ago in Dublin, something quite momentous must have happened in tinkerdom, for I saw vans and carts stabled in two vacant city backyards. And there they remained. I would pass these squatters regularly. One group was in Lad Lane, a back mews in what was formerly a fashionable Georgian quarter. The other families were off Meath Street adjacent the famous Coombe, where Swift walked, and within the ancient city walls so full of national history and to-day a semi-slum. There was a third group gone static, I remember, settled on common-land near the canal at Dolphin's Barn.

I am curious whether it is to any one of these families to whom Olivia Robertson alludes when she tells, in her sketches of Dublin slum-life, of the assimilation process overtaking the tinker Almonds.

A child is talking: "Our carryvan was condemned."

"I didn't know caravans could be condemned."

"Ours was, lady. It's a lovely carryvan, too, with twice the space in it than the flat they gave us, instead. It used to be beautiful goin' round the country in our carryvan. I hates the city. Concepta (her sister) do love the city. She goes in for talent contests . . ."

Private wars are a commonplace, and fighting—savage and foul fighting at that—is, I should think, the primitive animal force that keeps them alive at all. Some observers say that these are *always* about religion—if a priest is within a mile of them. But where little is accurately known of the ethics, moral code, and unwritten laws that bind the people together, other human pretexts can be imagined. At a pub I knew on the fringe of the Coombe, tinker brawls, which at closing time, frequently rent the week-end asunder, cost so much in glass and blood that the publican had to call in a force of local Civic Guards to protect his civilised customers—who fought only from the best patriotic motives, and for "freedom." "Mad with red-biddy before they got

here," he would fume. "The roaring vagabonds! The Guards should run in every bitch, brat, and manjack . . . living off the count-ery, the lousers."

To this day it's the same whenever rival bands get lit-up with successes or failures at market-towns. Provincial newspapers, with monotonous regularity, carry a column or two on the county sessions at which sentences are passed for being drunk and disorderly, for assault and battery, for resisting arrest and petty larceny. "Tinkers charged at Ballymacsaggart," "Prison for Knifing," "Women Clash in Rescue Attempt," make local headlines.

In Wicklow, West Kerry, and Connemara contains a reported conversation between J. M. Synge and a man whom he met on the side of a mountain to the east of Aughavanna. He mentions that the tramps and tinkers who wander down from the west had in Wicklow a curious reputation for witchery and unnatural powers:

"There's great witchery in that country," said the peasant, "and great knowledge of the fairies!" I asked him where most of them came from.

"They come from every part," he said, "they're gallous lads for walking round through the world. One time I seen fifty of them above on the road to Rathdangan, and they all match-making and marrying themselves for the year that was to come. One man would take such a woman and say he was going to such roads and places, stopping at this fair and another fair, till he'd meet them again at such a place, when the spring was coming on. Another, maybe, would swap the woman he had with one from another man, with as much talk as if you'd be selling a cow . . . the like of the crying and the kissing, and the singing and the shouting when they went off, you never heard in your life. When a party would be gone a bit down over the hill, a girl would begin crying out and wanting to go back to her ma. Then the man would say, 'Black Hell to your sowl, you've come with me now and you'll go the whole way . . .'"

In another chapter, *The Vagrants of Wicklow*, Synge tells how he got talking to a herd at a county fair, who happened to be sitting near a tinker mending a can.

This quotation has a special interest as it unmistakably is the seed from which grew that artistic gem of the contemporary realistic theatre, *The Tinker's Wedding*. In two acts he completed a fine psychological study of the conflict between the uncompromising contempt among tinkers for religion, and the wincing at the slur of being unchurched. And here is the germinating note; the dramatist is listening to the herd:

“ Then a woman came up and spoke to this tinker and they went down the road together. ‘ That man is a great villain,’ said the herd. ‘ One time he and his woman went up to a priest in the hills and asked him would he wed them for half a sovereign. The priest said it was a poor price, but he’d wed them surely if they’d make him a tin can along with it. ‘ I will, faith,’ said the tinker, ‘ and I’ll come back when it’s done.’ They went off then, and in three weeks they came back, and they asked the priest a second time to wed them. ‘ Have you the tin can?’ asked the priest. ‘ We have not,’ said the tinker. ‘ We had it made at the fall of night, but the ass gave it a kick this morning, the way it is isn’t fit for you at all.’ ‘ Go on now,’ says the priest, ‘ it’s a pair of rogues and schemers you are, for I won’t wed you at all.’ They went off then, and they were never married to this day . . . ”

Nobody could provide the mass-observationist with data on the lurid side of their lives and customs so well as the rural Guards. Unless, indeed, it be my friend, Owen Roe Ward, the tramping poet and ballad-singer, who knows the open roads better than most men, and who has eloquently championed in print the noble code that tinkers observe, and silenced a journalist in a press argument. One of his own songs that Owen has sold to local people throughout the four provinces, is called *The Rosse's Tramp*; quoted from his broadsheet *A Bundle of Wrack and Corn*, it gives the feeling of the Donegal countryside:

*Owl Scratchy Tramp they call me,
Aye, bedad, they do;
Work-shy vagrant, ne'er-do-well,
Backwash o' man, it's true;*

*Who shapes all hen-roost half-doors,
And pinches rid-hot cake;
Who drinks strong tay with widows,
But none o' them he'll take.*

*Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
He pinches rid-hot-cake;
Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
But none o' them he'll take.*

*In Mayo-o I gather tatties,
In Kerry win the hay;
And truck with rags and jam pots
Among the flowers of May.
I fight the frost of winter
With me ass named Hairy Ned;
And count the hungry stars by night,
Thro' the hedge above our bed.*

*Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
Me hairy ass named Ned;
Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
Through the hedge above our bed.*

*A-courtin' in a golden whin,
By heel o' harvest day;
A strappin', fair, young cutty herd
Unto me did say:
" Oh, trampin' man from Donegal,
With you I'll roam away . . ."
" I won't," said I, " be led astray,
To hell or Bantry Bay."
Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
Unto me did say;
Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
To hell or Bantry Bay.*

*Now for me courtin' capers,
I married am to be;
Her mother calls me " Tinker rogue,"
No in-law could agree.
For in a wee thatched ca-ab-in
I've settled down my load*

*Upon the hills near Dublin Town,
A spot where no cock crowed.
Fal-the-diddle-di-do,
Am a tinker rogue;
Fal-the-diddle-did-do;
A spot where no cock crowed.*

The tinker world offers the imaginative writer a wealth of facts relating to religious beliefs, sex code, health, literacy, politics, burial, ceremonial, childbirth, and so on, of which little has been co-ordinated.

Moreover, to see tinkers converging on a fat parish, in a single large family, or a winding procession of wagons, carts, and trotting foals, the women and girls hardy and bright-eyed, holding infants, the men independent, if ragged, with glances full of that "separateness" you sense in the eyes of outcasts and underprivileged, the teeming kids, wild as foxcubs and untameable—is to witness resentment crossing the faces of the propertied, the comfortable, the snug. Bitterly do they inspect this parade of human grasshoppers and blue-bottles commanding the public road at harvest time—and they feel uncomfortable.

THE SHELTA LEGEND

Like Egyptology, Ossian, or The Lost Ten Tribes, the "discovery" of a secret tinker language believed to be Gaelic in structure, caused some excitement during the last century. And untested hypotheses and rumours concerning it were too readily accepted as gospel. The Shelta Legend (for such it came to be during the period of amateurish interest it aroused), is to-day passed on casually; and the notion that Irish tinkers have still their own unique nomad-tongue patterned on Celtic etymology, is vaguely held. In fact, Shelta is far more English than Irish, and is to-day spoken by absolutely nobody.

With several scholars barking up the wrong tree, it was left to the antiquarian and Professor of Archaeology at the National University of Ireland, R. A. MacAlistair, finally to clear the air through the publication of his

researches in 1937¹. All available existing data was examined and in this work MacAlistair, in brief, advanced the following:

- (a) The linguistics of Shelta had been spurious. Its Druidic sources—a myth.
- (b) Some previous recorders, like Leland, had been confusing a Thieves' Language with rhyming slang.
- (c) English recorders of the spoken material were unequipped phonetically for the task, and therefore wrote down inaccurate values.

By his scientific comparative analysis of vocabularies, and language structure, he categorically established that:

- (d) True rhyming cant did not exist in Shelta.
- (e) The accidence of its syntactic construction contains next to nothing ancient and exclusively Celtic.
- (f) Marks of antiquity that had been confidently indicated proved to be illusory.

The quintessence of the book can be appreciated from the following conclusive excerpt:

“Shelta is a language concocted for purposes of secrecy by a community living parasitically in the midst of Irish speakers. When these people began to fashion Shelta, they may possibly have been Irish speakers; but they gradually adopted English from other wanderers from whom they joined forces. A sufficient number of Irish-speakers' hosts knew enough English to make English alone insufficient as a disguise. But they were not well enough acquainted with it to enable them to follow a conversation in English when it was freely interspersed with jargon words. These being adopted from Irish had to be sufficiently modified to prevent eaves-droppers from analysing them, in the instantaneous moments of time to which rapid conversation would limit them. This is the reason for the anomaly that except for a few cases of rhyming cant (like *grascoat* for ‘waistcoat’) English words are used without modification, while all but a microscopic proportion of the Irish words suffer alteration of one kind or another.”

¹ *The Secret Languages of Ireland* With chapters on Ogham, Cryptology Hisperic, Bog-Latin, The Vagrants, Shelta, Bearlagair na Säer. Cambridge University Press, 1937.

After the decisive summing-up of 150 pages of analysed data, perhaps the reader might appreciate some quotations in Shelta. I suppose that proverbs and oaths are the agreed-on tiles and mortar of any ancient vernacular, and here, accordingly are a few examples:

FIVE WISHES, GOOD AND EVIL

<i>Gamī grau to that glox.</i>	<i>Bad luck to that man !</i>
<i>Dâlyon mislî with you, swiblî.</i>	<i>God go with you, boy.</i>
<i>Nûs-a-Dhâlyon mwilsha havari.</i>	<i>God bless our home. havari.</i>
<i>Mislî, gamî grâ dhî-îl !</i>	<i>Be off, and bad luck to you.</i>
<i>Lûsh my kunya lyé smolkera.</i>	<i>(Insult).</i>

FIVE PROVERBS

<i>Mislô granhës thâber.</i>	<i>The traveller knows the road.</i>
<i>Thôman thâral and nijesh mûniâth.</i>	<i>Much talk and no good.</i>
<i>Nap grêdhûrn xuri nijesh muri.</i>	<i>A white-faced horse is never any good.</i>
<i>Sûgû thôris, mûlsha mislî glîét thom to loban.</i>	<i>War is coming, I'll be off to my cabin in the mountains.</i>
<i>Mwik biôrs nijesh myefn.</i>	<i>Connaught women have no shame.</i>

Macalister established that the underworld of Irish society, composed to a large extent of the dregs of an aboriginal population, "may have preserved some fragments of an earlier speech, which with the addition of argot words such as are current among people of the illiterate classes the world over, would be a secret possession of not inconsiderable practical utility to these down-trodden castes."

He further equated this "Babylonish hotch-potch" to "Serf-speech" and in his conclusions arrived at a terminus in scholarship which may also become a bridgehead for art. It is still left for the imaginative artist to fashion out of this valuable documentation a major work interpreting with full understanding the vagabondage now woven into the social fabric.

THE COCKNEY LAUREATE

John Manifold

IF you live in London then you probably know J. Smith of Bethnal Green. You may have passed him without taking much notice, like the pretty girl in the photograph; but you've probably seen him all the same. Next time (if you haven't done so already) you should try asking him for his latest poem.

They are good stuff, these poems of his. The Elizabethan and Commonwealth and Restoration ballad-mongers—the poets who wrote "Mary Ambree," and "John Dory" and "Hey then Up go We!"—would claim them as their own, but for the fact that they are right bang up to date on our present political themes. Some of the squatters have adopted his version of "Cockles and Mussels" as a local anthem already:—

So we all pushed the barrow
Through streets broad and narrow,
Crying, "Open the doors for the Missus and Kids!"

And the size of his audience is much too big to get by guesswork. He has sold 60,000 copies of one poem already, and others are not so far behind in numbers, and he has written and printed dozens and dozens of poems. Suppose each one is read by a family; suppose some are read by half the hands in a factory; suppose (as happened one day) that the entire staff of a well-known daily paper spent all morning bawling "The Squatters' Song" as they went about their work—well, that's an audience no other living poet in this country can command!

If you've seen him, you'll know him again. He has one arm and one leg, and a bush of wavy grey hair, and a face rather like the face of Liszt. No, that's not quite right: Liszt looks romantic and stern, and J. Smith looks humorous and lively, and as if carved out of weather-worn oak to be the figurehead of a warship.

And humorous and lively he is, too. He is fond of asking: "I could keep any company, couldn't I, and keep it laughing?" He descended out of the blue on to an excursion of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes

at Menai Bridge (of all places !) and reduced them to a state of hysteria. Hysteria of another kind was what he reduced the Manchester Police to, when some promotion-hungry youngster attempted to arrest him for begging. Perfectly secure in his legal right to sell his poems, he refused to move. I believe they had to uproot the lamp-post he clung to, a task made no easier by the way in which several hundred enthusiastic lovers of poetry and freedom attempted to regularise the matter. Like a one-legged Dimitrov he defended himself in the magistrate's court, and was discharged with honour. "Never bring that man near me again !" was the magistrate's final comment. And no one has.

Some of his impromptu phrases have become working-class legend. As, for instance, when one of those bogus "housewives" in a queue declared "The Jews get all the fish !" his was the voice that rejoined "What about the pork, lady ? *They don't eat pork.*" And one reply that needs to be better known, was made in the course of one of the unintermittent battles with petty tyranny on which he spends a lot of his spare time. An unfortunate old-age pensioner who likewise tried to hawk poems of his own composing, was *arrested* for begging. A poor little poem it was, a quiet little prayer that the poor old man might end his days with a little peace and quiet and leisure—and he was arrested for it ! Six months he got, from a magistrate who does not appear to have known that "vagrancy" charges are just a crawler's path to undeserved promotion. Then J. Smith took up the matter; he talked to that inhuman cop, and he talked to his superiors. When they tried to shut him up he replied with a line that the proudest hero of Corneille might have been honoured to speak: "You're speaking to one who fears neither God nor man nor devil. All I live for is to see what happens to people like you !" Then he took over the old man's pathetic poem, and blew a breath of his own unbeatable militancy into it, and hawked it and the whole story over the length and breadth of London. The poem is still in circulation, but it's a battle-cry on behalf of the pensioners now, not a humble prayer.

Then there's the tale of the blackshirts that called on him to see if his talent was for sale. "—— you," says J. Smith, "The only service I'll ask of you is when you come into power." "And what would that be?" says they. "Pull the smile off my face," says he, "For even when you stand me against a wall, I'll be laughing to think of the time you'll have, trying to wipe out the harm I've done you already!"

One winter when the weather was bad for selling, he was reduced to applying to the P.A.C. The officials obviously did not know him, and applied their usual stone-walling methods. He withdrew and began to give a speech to the applicants assembled outside, on what their rights were and how to obtain them. When the officials could bear no more, they had him back inside, and granted him relief on condition he did not call for it in person. Every week after that, he had his money brought to him, "until," as he says, "the sun shone again."

He has a particular, and justified, contempt for the brand of Christianity dished out to the East-enders by some of the Missions. One serious-minded toiler in the vineyard took him to task about it. "I heard you talking to those kids," says Smithy, "and making them sing 'Count your blessings.' Blessings! Bugs, disease, sleeping four in a bed, eight in a room! The stink in summer and the cold in winter! Father out of a job, and mother sweating her guts out chairing, and the landlord threatening to raise the rent! Blessings? If I had another arm to use, I'd take a horsewhip to you!" "Shortly after," he adds with quiet satisfaction, "they closed down and went away."

"I never have to think out what I say," he remarks, "The words just come to me when I get worked up. It's the same with my songs, only the first idea always needs working out and condensing and polishing. Sometimes I get an idea in the middle of the night, and hop out of bed to write it down. The kitchen table isn't occupied then, and I can spend a couple of hours on it." He is a careful and conscientious workman, and has a strong sense of the beauty of brevity. One poem started

life with sixteen verses; the printed version has six, all good. One poem insisted on being written during a sundown air-raid at Deptford (during which the poet had been doing heroic work as a volunteer warden) which continued, as they did in those days, far into the night. Making his way home, he sat up at an open window, correcting and polishing and finishing it off by the light of fires and gun-flashes.

He does not read very much poetry: there are as few "influences" to be seen in his work as in Henry Lawson's. Once in a way, he builds his poem as a parody of some well-known one. This is what he did with Kipling's "If," for example, and with one or two popular songs like "Cockles and Mussels," which I quoted above. The *song* element is important: he believes in having his work sung, if possible, and turns good tunes to his own use: "Excelsior," "Mountains of Mourne," and "I Come from the Country" have all been "*arr. Smith*" as the *Radio Times* says. But the basic metre of his work is the old traditional ballad-measure of "fourteeners" with a redundant syllable here or there to avoid monotony, and sometimes with a medial pause like Anglo-Saxon and later German ballads:—

We fought fires in dark and daylight,
Never asked what's your country or creed;
We only knew humans were buried,
And those poor people had to be freed.

And when it changes to couplets, it is to the couplets of the street-ballad, and of "King John and the Abbot":—

So never you try a fat rabbit to take,
But be clever enough to steal the estate.
Then to prison in motor you won't have to whirl;
They will make you a Lord or a Duke or an Earl.

It is no exaggeration to say that Smithy represents a very ancient and honourable tradition of English literature: he is a direct descendant of the ballad-mongers of whom the priests complained in Edward IV's time: "The people laugh at us and make songs of us all the day long," and against whom proclamations were made, "for suppressing fond ballads, rhymes, and other lewd treatises in the English tongue." He would have suffered

at the hands of Henry VIII, as having taken upon him, "by printed ballads, rhymes, &c., subtilly and craftily to instruct his highness' people, and specially the youth of this his realm" of which Henry took the dimmest view. It is not a tradition that goes in much for technical innovation. The balladists took as little notice of Donne or Milton as of Eliot or Dylan Thomas; they did not need such innovations. But when Donne went out of fashion, the ballads stayed in. When the fashion changed again and yet again, the ballads were still there, and still saying what needed to be said about King Charles, or the enclosures, or the workhouse, or Mosley, or the housing shortage.

And the busy little man in the bowler hat, and the bearded type with his nose in Mr. Drip's or Mr. Glue's latest volume, who sprints past Smithy with averted gaze, would be doing himself a lot more good if he stopped to buy what Smithy is selling, or could hear how Smithy describes him: "Mentally and physically crippled and exhausted, that's what the middle-class is," says he, "I've seen them at the Tube every morning running down the escalator, till one day it wasn't working. Then they all stopped, and said, 'We'll have to walk!'" He looks down on them from a great height: "As for me, I'm free—free to stop at the Hotel Haystack, or spend the night with Mrs. Greenfields; to leave my shirt off if I feel like it, which is more than a bank clerk can do! And I'm happier than they are: why shouldn't I be, with all the world to laugh at?"

THE POOL

Fred Urquhart

I HADN'T been at the Portobello Pool since the summer before the war, seven years ago. I realised this when I heard my sister-in-law say it was open again, after being closed during the war. I don't know what made me want to go. Maybe I wanted to see if I could recapture old times or something. Maybe I was at a loose end. When

you've been away from home for over six years, and you come back and find all your old pals married or dead or scattered or something, you take funny notions.

The last time I was at the Pool it was with my pal, Ginger. We'd been pretty young then—twenty-two. It's a long time ago, and I've been places since then, but I remember it all as clearly as though it had happened yesterday.

I remember Ginger saying: "It costs two pounds seven and a penny to get married."

And I'd said: "I'd look at my two pounds seven and a penny a lot of times and then I'd put it back in my pocket."

"You!" Ginger said.

"You would," he said. "If everybody was like you, mankind would soon die out."

"Why should it?" I said. "Because people stopped flinging around their two pounds seven and a pennies doesn't mean that the race wouldn't continue."

"Marriage is a lottery," I said.

We were standing at the G.P.O. waiting for Nelly and her pal, Babs. It was a Sunday and we were all going to the Pool. Ginger and Nelly were going to the Pool all right. They'd got caught and they couldn't afford to get married.

I remember that we talked tough, the way they talk in American movies, and all the time we were scared stiff. We didn't know at the time we were scared stiff. It's only now that I realise this. I'm seven years older, and seven years is a long time. But then we looked tough and we acted tough the same as everybody we saw around us. But all the time we were scared, and I reckon most of the people we saw were scared too. Everybody was scared at something. Maybe it was because they hadn't a job or couldn't pay their rent, or maybe it was because they'd gotten themselves into a fix like Ginger and Nelly. But mainly I think it was because they knew the war was coming. We all felt that something was going to happen in that summer of 1939.

"What do people do when they haven't got two pounds seven and a penny?" Ginger said.

"Don't ask me," I said. "I never had two pounds seven and a penny."

Nelly and Babs came along then, and we stopped worrying about money. Nelly was a cute little piece with curly black hair. She had on a checked suit and one of these tennis bandeaux. Babs was cute, too. It was the first time I'd met her. She had a towel and her bathing costume rolled under her arm.

We got on a Portobello tram. It was packed, mostly with fellows and girls about our own age, with towels rolled under their arms. Most of the fellows wore bright blue or green sports jackets and brown and white shoes, and the dames wore little pixie-caps or bandeaux. That harsh cyclamen was a pretty popular colour then.

Everybody talked loud. The top deck of the tram reverberated with snappy wisecracks that we'd all heard in different films. A crowd of kids about sixteen or seventeen at the front of the tram were singing *Let's Fall in Love*. I'll always remember that was the song. Because Babs and me sort of hummed it at each other. "Our hearts were made for it. Don't be afraid of it! Let's fall in looove!" But Ginger and Nelly didn't sing, and they didn't say much; they were too busy doing mental arithmetic. It wasn't so much the initial two pounds seven and a penny; it was what they were going to do after that. Ginger was getting only twenty-two and six a week and didn't look as if he'd ever get any more. And Nelly was getting only fifteen bob.

Babs and I talked a lot between singing. She was a cute kid all right. The more I looked at her and the way her eyebrows slanted up like Marlene Dietrich's, the more I understood how Ginger and Nelly had got themselves into such a fix. But I wasn't going to be such a fool as that, I said to myself. I had no two pounds seven and a penny to throw around.

The crowds were fairly flocking into the Pool. As we came off the tram we could see the high dive over the cream-coloured walls and the clock on top of the Pool Restaurant. It was twenty past three.

I remember the time because it was twenty past four when I first kissed Babs. We'd been playing around in

the water, then we'd come out and were sunning ourselves, and somehow or other we'd got to pawing each other a bit, and then I kissed her.

I didn't realise what I was doing until Nelly and Ginger laughed, and Nelly said: "Do you two aim to make a public exhibition of yourselves?"

And so we got away a bit from each other. I pretended I was watching a beefy old gent doing a fancy stroke. "Look at him!" I said. "Kidding himself on he's a youngster!"

"I hate to see old men swimming," Nellie said. "I'm always terrified they'll conk out."

"They shouldn't go into the deep end," Babs said. "There should be a law against it."

"There should be a law against anybody going into the deep end," I said, grinning.

"Caution is his middle name," Ginger said.

Babs jumped up and caught my hand. "Coming in again?"

"No," I said. "I'd rather sit here and watch."

"He's a ghoul," Ginger said. "He's hoping somebody'll get drowned."

"Yessir!" I said. "As long as it's not this baby!"

Babs kept on pressing me, but I wouldn't go in again. I'd had enough. I didn't want to have to do mental arithmetic like Nelly and Ginger.

I saw Babs once or twice after that, but then the war came and I didn't see her any more. Once or twice I've thought about her in the past six years, but not very much. I've had lots of other things to take up my attention. I've got around and had some good times.

I was thinking about all this as I stood at the G.P.O., waiting in a queue for a Portobello tram. And I don't know what it was, but I began to feel a bit old. It was funny. I'd never had that feeling all the time I was in the army. It's just since I came home that I've noticed it. I've noticed it especially when I've seen that the kids in our street are young men and women now. It's like the feeling I had one night in a pub when a young sub-lieutenant spoke to me. He said: "You're Tommy Geddie, aren't you?" I said I was, wondering who the

hell he was. And then he said "I'm John Cruickshank," and I remembered the last time I'd seen him he was a kid of fourteen delivering our milk.

The feeling got worse as I got on top of the tram. There were so many kids on it: young fellows and girls in their early twenties. Made me feel like a grandfather! And there was a crowd of youngsters singing *I Dream of You*. It was just like old times. Still . . . I wasn't dressed any different from them and I'm sure I didn't look older, but I felt uncomfortable. I began to wish I had somebody with me, somebody I could talk to and fool around with. Somebody like Ginger . . .

Poor old Ginger; he'd got shot down on ops. over Germany. Nelly hadn't liked being a widow very much, and the last I heard she was knocking around with a Yank. I expect she's away by this time as a G.I. bride. Nelly wasn't one for waiting long.

I wondered about Babs. The last time I saw Nelly she said Babs was in the A.T.S. Probably she was married by this time. Maybe she was a G.I. bride, too . . .

I must say those kids on top of the tram scared me a bit. They all talked so loud, and they acted so tough. They kept shouting wisecracks at each other: wisecracks I'd heard in films I'd seen in the last few weeks. I tried to tell myself they were just the same kind of people as me and Ginger and Nelly and Babs had been. They were just the same; it was just that I was a wee bit older. I'd been places and seen things those kids had never seen. That was all. They were just like me and Ginger under the skin. In fact they didn't look any different. The fellows wore bright checked sports jackets, though some of them were in uniform. And the girls wore bandeaux just the same as Nelly and Babs, only they'd arranged them a bit different. Those that didn't have bandeaux had their hair bunched on top of their foreheads and falling shoulder-length at the back. There really wasn't any difference. Seven years wasn't such a long time after all.

I took a decko at my reflection in the tram window. I didn't look any different from any of the other fellows. No grey hairs, nothing like that.

When the tram stopped at the Pool there was a rush to get off. A crowd of guys were bunched at the top of the stairs. I was standing, waiting for them to get down. One of them stood aside and said: "After you, old man!"

That rankled a bit. I kept thinking about it. I suppose it was perfectly natural for the bloke to call me "Old man." He probably called all his pals that. I used to do the same when I was his age. But—well, it was this standing aside for me that got my goat. I'd never have done that if I'd been in his position.

It sort of took the gilt off the bright sunny day. I loafed around the Pool, watching the swimmers. There were all shades of sunburn, and all stages of nudity and semi-nudity. And almost everybody was young. There were hardly any middle-aged people at all. The only ones I saw were two elderly women, evidently sisters and spinsters, who were sitting side by side, spectating. I wondered idly as I passed them what kind of sex-thrill they got out of it. They looked kind of funny and out of place. This wasn't a place for old people at all.

Everybody seemed to have somebody else with them. Fellows and girls, fellows with other fellows, girls with girls, young men with kids, young women with kids. I stood for a while at the shallow end, watching a young bloke trying to teach his kid to swim. The kid kept calling: "Daddy! Daddy! I'm goin' to sink!" The bloke just told him to go ahead and not be a mutt. And he grinned at me and said: "I guess we've all felt like that at sometime."

I talked to him for a while, then his wife came up with another kid, so I moved on. But I was beginning to feel a bit strange with nobody to talk to amongst all this crowd. I don't know what it was. In the army I'd never felt like this; I'd always had plenty of people to talk to—too many around me sometimes. But here it was as if I were walking in some sort of isolation. As if I had leprosy or something.

I leaned on the rail, overlooking the deep end, just above the spot where I'd kissed Babs. I was leaning like this when a girl in A.T.S. uniform came and leaned beside me. Something in the way she stood made me look

at her again. She was like Babs a bit. It was just a bit, but something in the way she held her head brought back memories.

She saw me looking at her, and she looked away quickly. Then she looked back, and then she smiled. She was a cute kid all right. Nice grey eyes and nice fair hair, a shade darker than Babs'.

"Warm, isn't it?" I said.

"Terrible," she said.

"Uncomfortable things, uniforms, when you're hot," I said.

"You've said it," she said.

"Glad to get rid of mine, anyway," I said.

"I've three months to go yet," she said.

"Still!" she laughed. "I don't need to worry about spending my coupons just yet!"

The radio was playing *I Dream of You*. From the loud-speaker near us the words came rolling out: "How can you ever know . . . the way I feel . . .?"

As if from a great distance I seemed to hear Ginger say again with twenty-two years' old insolence: "Caution is his middle name."

"Oooooh!" the A.T.S. girl cried. "Surely that kid's too young to go in the deep end?"

"Not him," I said, glancing over the rail at the kid who'd taken a header into the pool. "He knows what he's doing."

"Maybe," she said. "But if I were his mother I'd be scared stiff to let him come here and do that."

"But you're not his mother, sister!" I laughed. "You can't learn young enough!"

"Like to come to the restaurant for an ice-cream?" I said.

"That would be swell," she said.

I'm taking Helen to the pictures on Wednesday night. If it cost two pounds seven and a penny to get married seven years ago, what does it cost now? Not that I care. If it cost only ten bob I'd still look at it twice and then put it back in my pocket.

MALLARME: OBSCURITY IN POETRY

Louis Aragon

I do not deny that in all which concerns the criticism of poetry, I am the battlefield of a strange contradiction: my two-edged feeling is a mixture of hunger for knowledge and horror of desecration. This is precisely why I am impatient of the heavy hands of commentators, and why I am irritated nevertheless not to find real critical clarity at one and the same time irreverent and full of deference, at the foot of the texts of contemporary poetry. While I am indignant at the obscurantism which tends to leave in shadow the ordering of the words, their meaning and the whole range of the history of the poem, I still have something in me, heir as I am to ancient terrors, that revolts against the tearing of the veil.

This is why I pick up books by disectors of poetry with a mixture of profound excitement and aversion: I open them trembling and derisive, and there is always a vestige of dread that in them I will find a beautiful corpse, poetry on the dissecting table, stomach open, nerves pinned-back, epiploon sticking out. But I take a grip on myself, and do not avert my eye, avid, after all, to know.

With these feelings, I have just read two books. One of these discusses Rimbaud and Mallarmé from the special point of view of the psychiatrist; the other, concerned solely with Mallarmé, is by a man who, with enormous care, just as one stretches out the wings of a butterfly transfixed on a cork, unravels every line of this poet, every phrase, and puts forward an interpretation. The one explains everything by the glimmer of pathology; the other by that of exegesis. The first pursues the man, the other the thought. It is possible that Rimbaud and Mallarmé are everything that Dr. Jean Fretet sees from a clinical point of view when he reads their poetry, but the essence of their poetry is completely missing in his analysis, just as it escapes in a very different

way from Camille Soula when he is content to *tinker with*, to unite, or make a whole of the verbal mystery of Mallarme. In a different way: but it is not fruitless to bring the two methods, the two commentaries, together.

Take the quatrain,

*O si chère de loin et proche et blanche, si
Délicieusement toi, Méry, que je songe
A quelque baume rare émané par mensonge
Sur aucun bouquetier de cristal obscurci.*

I will give the two critiques of this, without comment. First of all, here is the medical:

In fact, the love-life of Mallarmé seems to have been calm, to say the least of it. At twenty, the pleasure-trips to the forest of Fontainebleau were only frolics. And later, it is certainly not a passionate attachment to his wife which keeps the poet at home. His only mistress is poetry; she is completely absorbed in herself. Mallarmé did not put himself out for anyone but Méry Laurent; he was no longer young. The quiet modesty of the affection which he held for her, free of all discord, leads one to ask whether he ever did anything but write verses to her. In addition, it is a question of only a few brief masterpieces.

*O si chère de loin et proche et blanche, si
Délicieusement toi, Méry . . .*

The beginning is gallant; what follows is less so. In the third line, the lover has already forgotten his lady-companion:

. . . que je songe
A quelque baume rare émané par mensonge
and then see him return to his obscure indulgences in
. . . aucun bouquetier de cristal obscurci
—all rather like the practices of a solitary. “ This is no exaggeration. One is not obscure with women. There is no poetical mysticism when the poet is deeply moved and telling his love. He speaks to his beloved and talks to her in her own language. If he speaks in any other way, it is because only poetry interests him.

“ *Pour moi, la poésie tient lieu d'amour, parce qu'elle est éprise d'elle-même.* So rapid a flight into the most obscure poetry as early as the third line of a gallant sonnet, approxi-

mates to those incantations of solitude to which children give themselves up, knowing it is wrong . . . ”

And so on. But look at the other critique, the verbal: Yet all that Stephane Mallarmé has said personally about love has evolved from a head of hair, and very probably from the same head of brilliant blonde hair . . . Its attraction for Mallarmé lies in an inborn predisposition. One finds in his poems anterior signs of the hold which the blonde hair of Méry has on his senses . . . It is with the two sonnets

Dame sans trop d'ardeur

and

O si chère de loin et proche et blanche . . .

(closely allied in their meaning) that the blonde hair (of Méry) appears for the first time in the work of Mallarmé. . . . Actually this hair only appears in the last line of the second sonnet:

. . . toute une autre douceur

Tout bas par le baiser seul dans tes cheveux dite.

These sonnets merit our attention for other reasons too. One finds in them the exposition and development of two symbols which are extremely important for Stephane Mallarmé, the symbols of the Rose and the Diamond. . . . The Rose evokes the feminine body . . . in both sonnets under discussion the symbol of the Rose concentrates on the mouth of the beloved:

. . . ton sourire éblouissant prolonge

La même rose . . .

The mouth, then, will call up feelings of purity as it opens. The Rose unlocks the Diamond from *son blanc habit de pourpre*, because the beloved is white.

O si chère de loin et proche et blanche . . .

But the mouth, as it opens, reveals the purple lining of the white cloak.

And so it becomes clear that Méry, who, without . . . *crises de rosée . . . ni brise . . . mais gentiment . . .*

Jalouse d'apporter je ne ne sais quel espace

Au simple jour le jour très vrai du sentiment.

(Jealous of bringing I know not what breadth

To simple day the clear day—truth of feeling)—

that the woman, anxious only to bring to the poet

emotional nourishment which would not tire him at all, should be represented as the

Dame

*sans trop d'ardeur à la fois enflammant
La rose qui cruelle ou déchirée et lasse
Même du blanc habit de pourpre le délace
Pour ouir dans sa chair pleurer le diamant.*

(Lady

without too great a passion at once enkindling
The rose which cruel or lacerated or weary
Even of the white coat of purple unlaces
To hear within the flesh the diamond weep.)

This Rose is clearly the one which is drawn out by Méry's dazzling smile. It is the one which makes him think of

*A quelque baume rare émané par mensonge
Sur aucun bouquetier de cristal obscurci . . .*

A flower-vase can evidently make men dream in very different ways. But in which case have we come nearest to the poetry of Mallarmé? It's anyone's guess.

Nevertheless, it will be seen that these two critiques are based on a common idea, as strongly fixed in Dr. Fretet as in Soula: and that is that these poems are obscure. Further, isn't the word "mallarméan" synonymous with "obscure" in everyday language? It is therefore quite natural that these commentators should consider Mallarméan obscurity as a given fact. If, however, I forget (and I am entitled to) that this sonnet is by Mallarmé, and that I read the following straight off at this very moment:

O si chère de loin et proche et blanche, si
Delicieusement toi, Méry, que je songe
A quelque baume rare émané par mensonge
Sur aucun bouquetier de cristal obscurci.
Le sais-tu, oui ! pour moi voici des ans, voici
Toujours que ton sourire éblouissant prolonge
La même rose avec son bel été qui plonge
Dans autrefois et puis dans le futur aussi.
Mon cœur qui dans les nuits parfois cherche à s'entendre
Ou de quel dernier mot t'appeler le plus tendre
S'exalte en celui rien que chuchoté de soeur
N'était, très grand trésor et tête si petite,

Que tu m'enseignes bien toute une autre douceur
Tout bas par le baiser seul dans tes cheveux dite.

(So dear both far and near and whitest, so
Deliciously yourself that, Méry, I dream
Of some rare balm extruded by a lie
On any flower-vase of clouded crystal.
For years to me, for years, ah well you know,
Always your glowing smile draws vivid out
The same rose with its lovely summer driving
Roots in the past and in the future too.

My heart, which seeks to catch its own night-beats
And whose most tender word to greet you knows
Sole exultation in a sister's whisper,
Lives, my great treasure and so-small head, only
To teach me utterly another sweetness
Soft by the mere kiss in your hair announced.)

and if in one burst I get to the end, without tripping over this flower-vase, whose obscurity seems to me to be merely syntactical, I feel it a very straightforward sonnet. The rose may signify this or that, very possibly the mouth of Méry, but also possibly the story of the two lovers *qui plonge . . . Dans autrefois et puis dans le futur aussi . . .* and the most browbeating psychiatrist will surely agree that the poet is not obscure with his lady, that he talks to her in her own language, or more naturally in the language of lovers *très grand trésor et tête si petite*), and finally that the tenderness in

Tout bas par le baiser seul dans tes cheveux dite
in no way resembles the practices of a solitary.

I admit that there is injustice and unfairness on my part in comparing and bringing together two commentaries which have two such different starting points. I knew that. And if I tend to reproach Fretet for the slightly over-hearty language, a little facetious, let's say, that he uses quite consciously ("the beginning is gallant; what follows is less so") that does not affect his thesis, or the existence of what he calls *pōetic alienation*. Still less can an easy triumph be won over the huge patient work of Camille Soula, exegetist, which I would like to discuss a little more fully.

It is agreed that the mere desire to clarify words by words, which inspires this writer, completely in the abstract, cannot bring him to a grasp of the *poetry* of Mallarmé; but then that is not his aim. He has the meaning as his objective. One could, without doubt, quibble with Soula about such and such an interpretation, but that would not advance the question one single step. Take it, in reading his book, that he is faultless. Whether in the view of the Café du Commerce or in the view of the Sorbonne, he gives an *explanation* of Mallarmé. I won't linger on what escapes this explanation, and what Soula knows very well escapes him when he turns away from the passion, the dream of the poem, and so becomes only a breaker-down of phrases. That which I call, as I always do, the Song. No.

No, it is not that, it is not this failure to bring fire out of inflammable material with which I reproach the author of the *Gloses*. That would be to deny the chemist, and I am not quite sure that to compare the mystery of poetry to alchemy would be anything but a bad commonplace image. But even so I cannot be content with this idealistic critique of language by language, and I see quite well why Soula, as well as Fretet, trips over that flower-vase of clouded crystal. As far as Fretet is concerned, he must at all costs find some clinical significance; while Soula must find the Rose of his symbolism, even if the Rose only appears in the succeeding strophe, and the obvious association of the Rose with the flower-vase does not necessary imply that the Rose is in the flower-vase.

What is wrong is that neither one nor the other takes seriously this flower-vase of clouded crystal, which is neither symbol nor symptom nor a stop-gap word. But a period piece. Something which dates. The poetry of Mallarmé has enough of such things and to spare. It has its precious collection, which becomes, in the passage of time, a museum. Very instructive for history and the history of manners of a definite period, that of Mallarmé. This second half of the nineteenth century, on a mezzanine floor of the Rue de Rome, with Gautier not far away, whose bad oriental taste, however, has retired, folding up its stuffs. Everything here is stylised. A

style which touches Baudelaire at one moment and Appollinaire at another. And then the flower-vase. One can learn more of the poetry of Mallarmé by making an inventory of the properties found in it, by restoring to his setting its sensibility, the dresses of the women, the fashion of the fan, the jewels, the lamps of his time—than by trying desperately to understand one word after another. An effort which, when exactly completed, might quite easily give rise to a simple “So what?” In the future, young people dreaming of that period will discern far less difference between Mallarmé and Maupassant, who are contemporaries, than between Mallarmé and Rimbaud, who are so often linked together. (And what's more it is enough to read what Mallarmé could write about Rimbaud, the amazing piece by Mallarmé on Rimbaud, to grasp the absurdity of this linking together.) But I was saying something very simple: that in Mallarmé, much of his obscurity comes from the fact that we do not take his words literally, that we complicate our reading unnecessarily, and that, at bottom, his poetry is the kind which is immediately grasped by painters by whom he was very strongly influenced, Whistler, and especially Alfred Stevens, who are obscure to no one. Not to go to extremes: in the museum of Mallarmé, which I mentioned before, one sees the furnishings of a particular Parisian *bourgeoisie*, at the time of oil-lamps and gas-light. Which is also the time of the Goncourts and of Chinese silk-stuffs.

... *Quelle soie aux baumes de temps*

Où la chimère s'exténue.

(What silk with the balms of time where the
chimera stretches.)

And Jean Cocteau likes to tell how *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, odd fantasy of the poet, was written by Mallarmé for the elder Coquelin as a monologue for recitation. This does not of course explain everything in it, but it gives the key to certain movements in the declamatory unfolding of the poem. Take this *Réflechissons* . . .

... *prouve, hélas ! que bien seul je m'offrais*
Pour triomphe la faute ideale des roses.

*Réfléchissons . . . ou si les nymphes dont tu gloses
Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux !*

which Camille Soula annotates as follows:

"*Réfléchissons . . .* There would be nothing to reflect on. The vision was imaginary and the Faun knew it only too well. But he did not want to admit it, but he must have a subject for his poem and the adolescent loses himself in contemplation of the voluptuous memory of rumps. . . ." etc.

At which I confess that I actually prefer to imagine the sandy-haired Professor of English confronting his psyche which reflects no coombe, with his goatee, taking for himself an attitude of meditation, his chin in his hand, "Let us reflect," just as he wrongly imagines the great fashionable actor would do on the stage of the Théâtre Français, the one who recited *Pickled Herring* by his friend, Charles Cros, so well.

Admittedly, this is not the kind of explanation sought by Camille Soula, who is an Occitan; and his whole book betrays it, and treats poetry as the poets of his home country treat love and women, completely in the abstract. That is to say what in effect I wish to underline in Soula's book: that, by the natural tendency of this Toulousian disposition, he has certainly written, not analyses of Mallarmé, but a study which attempts to connect Mallarméan poetry with Occitane poetry. I do not know if he is himself conscious of this. (In this respect, the *Essai sur le symbole de la chevelure* is particularly characteristic, where the analysis is only the pretext for a differently ambitious objective, the explanation of monogamy, not only of the one man, Mallarmé, but as it has worked out in the evolution of society: however, the problem is only posed, because the author has at his disposition nothing but abstract criticism of a poetry concerning which he says himself: "Mallarmé is the poet who more than any other uses abstraction most liberally.") And I would also like to quote the analysis of *Toast Funèbre*, included in a letter containing this very intelligent admission: "It is quite certain that it is the grammar of Mallarmé which awaits its analysers; and I certainly do not claim to have touched this question." Which gets very close, to my way of thinking, to the essential problem of

Mallarméan obscurity, just as I discussed it with regard to that "any flower-vase," an entirely syntactical matter.)

It is practically impossible to imagine these two methods, that of Jean Fretet and that of Camille Soula, applied to a living poet who could read them and reply. The death of a poet, however, is not a turning-point in his poetry, but an incident in his private life; and it is difficult to explain just what justifies this critical delay in the knowledge of a text written, finished, and after all detached from its author. Unless we admit there is not something derogatory, just as much towards the dead poet as the living poet, in the method employed. Perhaps both the critics just miss some brilliant secret which awaits its discoverer. It is true that neither the psychiatrist nor the exegetist attempts to make a critique, or at least only on the side.

Nevertheless it sometimes happens, in each one of them to depart from the medical observation or out of the explanation of the texts; and it is then that we have the right to ask them, confronted with poem and poet, for a definite conception of poetry.

If, for example, Fretet, trying to show the "asphyxiation of talent under the vacuum bell of Descartes"—the various stages of the agony of talented minds from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, finds his arguments in the established feeling that there is no poetry properly speaking (in France) from Racine to Chénier, or as he says, that "from Boileau to Leconte de Lisle the gulf widens," one must stop at the examples he gives.

He goes on to accuse Chateaubriand of trickery, and the following argument is conclusive for him:

"Complete trickery. The rough drafts of Chateaubriand leave no possible doubt on the subject. Passing through Avignon in 1802, he visits the spring of Vaucluse. 'I will tell you what it is,' he writes to Fontanes. 'It deserves its reputation. As for Laura the prude and Petrarch the wit, they have spoiled the fountain for me. I thought I would break my neck when I tried to climb the mountain.' Now read the passage in the *Mémoires* where he writes of his pilgrimage: 'One could hear in the distance the sound of Petrarch's lute; one solitary

canzone, escaped from the grave, continued to charm Vaucluse with a deathless melancholy.’’

It is certain that here, doctor or not, the critic has the advantage of the poet with some evidence; and the reader nods his head, convinced. But I am tempted in reading it (and who wouldn’t?) to laugh. And yet a specious argument, asserted with singular assurance; but imagine the situation reversed, that Chateaubriand had been a journalist, and that he had written a piece reporting his trip, and that we had already seen in his paper these words—“I thought I would break my neck.” Then the reporter dies, and in his papers we discover this lute, this solitary *canzone*, this immortal melancholy. Faced with this contradiction, we would begin to muse, touched and wondering. But would not the insincerity be perhaps as great? But we would have imagined a Chateaubriand forced by the conditions of life to speak a crude language although in a corner of his heart he cultivated poetry; we would have held forth about this phenomenon of reserve in the language, &c. All the same, the contradiction would hold good, the two texts would remain the same. Is it not true that, in the one as in the other case, we would be drawing too hasty conclusions which imply ignorance of an essential element of appreciation? An element which is of the very nature of poetry; and I have no gratitude for anyone who gets a grim pleasure out of spoiling the delight I feel in reading this phrase: “One solitary *canzone*, escaped from the grave, continued to charm Vaucluse with a deathless melancholy.” I prefer to let that live in me, singing.

What I am trying to say will be clear from an example. You hear a very beautiful voice singing a love-song or an aria from an opera. It is purity itself, and you listen motionless, your thoughts and emotions seething; in a moment you will be on the edge of tears. Well, the singer is an impossibly vulgar man, every thought of his is crude; the song itself has been written by a penniless fellow of the sort that we call a librettist, and it hasn’t a rhyme which isn’t incredibly banal, an adjective which hasn’t been dragged through all the mud of convention; and

to continue, as the final straw, the singer is a pimp, the musician a dish-washer, and you yourself not up to much. Does that change anything at all in that tremor, in that moment untoachable by criticism, in that emotion of poetry, profoundly real poetry, caught for one instant by you and by the singer? Your critique, however pertinent it may be, has forgotten an essential element of poetry: *the Song*. And I say this for Fretet, and against the quite gratuitous assertion of poetical asphyxia under Descartes' vacuum bell; for if we are no longer moved by that which has moved others, it proves nothing. And I say it in a different form, not only for Camille Soula, whose love for Mallarmé is definite, but for all critics who think they have said all there is to say when they have studied the meaning of verse or prose! On the other side of your exegesis the *Song* remains.

At this point of my commentary I must note where my parallel of the two authors as critics is justified, and to do so I must again quote Soula.

"Mallarmé begins his poetic activity by sacrificing the beauty of the verse. He ignores that what I do not want to call a psychic weakness tends to drag him along this road to sacrifices which logic does not permit and good sense does not forgive. However, the mental anomaly does not show itself at first except in a sort of bizarrie," and so on.

Here is the "poetical alienation" of Dr. Fretet. For my part, I believe that a day will come when these lines and the explanation which a doctor is obliged to fabricate to-day about the Case Mallarmé will be as mysterious as Mallarmé's poetry is now supposed to be. For men will then have ceased to find the meaning of a poem in the literal sense of the words: they will know how to integrate this literal sense with the historical period in which the words were thought and written, with the setting of the poet, with the society where he lived—to sum up, with his full circumstances.¹

(Translated by Ann Lindsay.)

¹ Dr. Jean Fretet, *L'Aliénation poétique Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Proust*, and Camille Soula, *Gloses sur Mallarmé* (preface by Jean Cassou).

DON DU POEME

Stéphane Mallarmé

THIS child of Idumean night to you I bring !
Dark, dragging a plucked and wounded wing;
Through the glass by spices burnt and gold,
Through frozen panes, alas ! still sad and cold
Dawn broke and this angelic lamp beheld,
O laurels ! when this relic lay revealed
Before a father puzzled at his brood,
A shudder shook the sterile solitude.
O lullaby for foul delivery made
By chilled and childish feet accompanied,
And voice that string and keyboard notes rehearsed,
With faded finger will you squeeze the breast
Where woman's self in sibylline whiteness flows
For lips the virgin air made ravenous ?

(Translated by W. J. Strachan.)

FROM THE GREEK

George Barker

I

I DELIGHT, with a fellow drinker,
To drown the undesirable crisis:
I am addicted to Dionysos.

But most of all I delight to adorn
My head with flowers among the curls
And to be happy with different girls.

My heart is innocent of jealousy:
I adore the tender sensibilities
And abominate drunken hostilities.

Let us enjoy life as it seems
When we sing and tell tall stories
And ruin young girls in lavatories.

II

Morning Star, enemy of lovers, why
Do you move so slowly across the sky
Now that another lover
Is warm under Maisie's bedcover ?

(After Anacreon and Meleager.)

THE KID FROM KALMAZOO

John Mitchell

OUR train was little and dirty and humble and we hated it. Whatever took our attention from the windows we maligned. We had a grudge. We were getting even.

“Hi! Look at the choo-choo!”

The yard-engine gamely bunting a string of pint-size freightcars along the tracks *was* stubby.

“Do they call this service?”

The train was late. Altogether it was better that the English were in a minority. I don’t think we would have wanted too many of them to hear our paratrooper, either.

Jammed nearest me in the corridor, which smelled of bodies and weariness, he behaved as if he were riding a toy. And he wasn’t only my neighbor. He wanted to be pals with everybody on board. He talked loud enough, that is. He was probably the loudest talker in the E.T.O. We could just hear him above the roar.

The carriage, as they are called, certainly was narrower than in the States, and a thing for hoisting we passed did suggest a Meccano set, yet the roadbed was smoother and there were none of those sudden bumps you got back home.

He agreed with me up to a point. “Okay for the yokels I guess,” he answered in his hard movie-gangster speech, almost in the face of a “yokel” pressed up against his ribbons. His contempt might have been the badge of his trade. Being “airborne” also gave you airs. A jerk from Hoboken, the Kid from Kalmazoo, I said, headed for glory—it was near D-Day—and blowing off about it. We others would have settled for Paddington.

And then something happened. For a while it was easier riding. Our hate began to make sense.

“What’s the Sarg want us to do?” he said. Who cared? The sergeant was the biggest four-flusher in the 82nd Paratroop Division and we didn’t give a hoot. It was in the nature of things on that train. He tried again. He thought we would pay attention. And we did, suddenly.

"Oh, this son of a bitch's cute." You could almost see the words in his cruel mouth, see them being twisted—and we twisted with him, vicariously. "Idea is we try to touch the tail with a broom when we pan out. Keeping us busy, you understand. Well, every guy that does it gets a case of beer. On pay-day, he says."

We knew why his hands went up. He was going to throttle the Sarg. There were lumps between his fingers like hardened taffy, rope burns he called them, and we felt as if we had bristling lumps on our own hands.

"We never got it! Every God-damn one of us touches the tail of the plane with the broom. We were good, see. But Tin-ear says, 'No fair!' We were cheating, the Sarg says. The cheap son of a bitch."

A GI cut in tartly on his punch-line. "Say, guy, don't you ever get scared?" Someone's snigger came cleanly up out of the noise and he coughed and used his handkerchief. "Yeah," he said and he seemed to weaken, "You sweat out the fiftieth jump same way you do the first," and now we had his number and our hate spell ebbed, taking our interest. He was only a guy with a cold in his head wanting sympathy. Still only a jerk with a grudge whom you'd best agree with. And we were very weary.

Half asleep I heard, "You see, I'll make a ballplayer out of him yet. Yes sir!" He spat the words against the window, at his own dim image. I turned to the others, as if for help, but they were locked away in the torpor of the train motion and did not notice. Except for the army.

The GI in the compartment behind me said, "Guy's wacky." Another nodded and said, "He ought to be," and a third, opening his mouth to fold in a stick of Spearmint, added, "They tune 'em up too tight." It was as if I'd overheard a military secret.

Two air corps officers who had stopped to listen turned to push their way on down the crowded passage. As they did so the paratrooper saw them. Something was shaping in his mind as he pondered them, a appeal of some sort, but their two dead-pans plainly said, so what? Yes, they'd heard about the Sarg. They too had 'chuted

out into hundred-mile gales. They knew the racket. This Joe had nothing on them. It was all there, without a word, a routine. The one in "pinks," a captain, turned to the other and said in curt dismissal, "What say?" and on they went.

"Can't jump in these things!" It was the paratrooper appealing to us instead, pointing at his feet. His jump-boots were makeshift ordinary shoes with canvas leggings above. "I had three pairs once, but I was hard up. Too many crap games. Now what d'you see? Infantry, artillery, 'technicals'—" He glared at the retreating officers as though to snatch them back for inclusion. "—all the Johnnies that stays put on the ground, they got jumpboots." The ground Johnnies did seem to be good crapshooters. The corridor watched with dull curiosity. "I'll get me a pair though. One of these bastards'll be laying on his back in town tonight and I'll get me a pair. All I have to do is pick the right size."

"Watch out, you'll step on the kid," I said. A small boy was closest him on the other side.

Over the heads came the captain's Texas drawl. "Bud, you-all better get yourself a woman instead!"

How hard they must think us, I thought, looking at the English. But those harried civilians didn't seem to think. All they could do was submit. There was only myself and the child to hear the paratrooper, diminished now. "He don't know it," he said gently enough, "but I got me a woman already."

More came, a little, enough. It came fast.

Kalmazoo had a wife here. He had an English son. "Yeah," he said as if in wonder. That was the ball-player and until yesterday he had not yet seen him. So he had walked and hitched seventy miles on a local pass, which meant running a minefield of M.P.s. Now he was going back. He had got there and then had to turn about.

My mind unstuck. No wonder he acted like he was out on parole. Taking a train was an open bid to arrest. I asked myself why must he be so loud and attract attention, but the answer didn't seem to matter, and there was that sign on him.

But I did suggest that he forget about the jumpboots, pass up the bright spots. And then, because he still wanted the bright spots, and because the bright spots cost money, I went on, "Costing you dough I suppose. Having the kid."

"Yeah."

"Still, you get extra money don't you?" I pointed at his insignia.

"Yeah."

"Look, brother, you're a damn sight better off than these English Johnnies."

"Yeah. Sure I get fifty bucks extra. If I do a jump once every three months."

I thought he was going to pop me one. He said, "Then I get cleaned in the first crap game." I backed away. He couldn't shoot dice but he could nudge. "And why do I get in them crap games? Because my pay is allotted."

"Allotted." The target had shifted.

"I get clipped before I even see the dough. Only get a part of it. They take out the allotment, see." Anyway you said it was bad.

"Your folks," I said. I wasn't asking exactly. To mention the "folks" of such a hardened character seemed like parody. But suddenly thought drove like a fist through his face, moving muscles his training had overlooked. The hand that had been clenched he used more as a hand should be used, gently. He touched his eyes. It couldn't have been just the cold in his head. It was the semblance of wiping away a tear. .

I didn't have the slightest compunction. "Look, old man," I said with calculated concern, "you oughtn't to be standing out in the draught with a cold like that. Here, one of these boys'll give you a seat." I inclined myself back into the compartment. I risked losing him to gain his confidence, but I was sure I could trust these hibernating Joes. "Say, corporal, this fellow here's pretty sick. Out on his feet with the 'flu."

I felt myself as if jerked into a meatchopper to be ground to fine pieces.

"Lay off, will you? I didn't say I was sick. All I wanted to say is it takes most of my pay."

"But your wife," I came back, "an English girl, I mean, she can make the dollars stretch—" I didn't really get that far.

"My wife's American!" he shouted.

The GIs stared at the sick man's comeback. A patriot, too. His wife was American, think of that. They didn't make the cracks verbal, though. They respected his wackiness.

But I persisted. "You mean there's two?"

"I mean that's where my money goes."

That was that.

The train jogged on. GI snores bumped along too. A top kick with a smear of Hershey bars on his cuff slid to the floor. Just for a bit of fun, I thought. The sergeant jacked himself back up, eyes still shut.

Something more than curiosity made me begin, "But what are you going to do? I mean, which one—" I almost said "love."

I stopped on my own. I waited for him to sock. It would only be right. Other ways were effete, unmanly, the army had seen to that, and he had cause.

"Gladys," he said.

Everybody knew who "Gladys" was.

"The one in the States."

He didn't nod. It wasn't so simple. The fist was driving through again.

"You any children—over there?"

He might have, just. He was older than the average paratrooper, all of twenty-five.

He hadn't smiled before. It was like the fist, driving in reverse.

"Not the last time I heard."

"The English girl—you married to her?"

I'd hit a nerve again and he didn't answer. He was writhing. His shoulders drew together so that he looked like a small boy. I didn't have him crying yet. I wasn't sure I wanted to.

"A guy gets lonely."

I listened. I had to hear for the others, including the English.

"She was okay when I got the bug for the army. She says, 'Sure, you go, Fred.'" He swallowed. It wasn't easy to talk the way he usually talked. It didn't say it right. This was different. "And she says, 'We can wait for Junior.' That's the kid we were going to have. 'I'll get a job,' she says. 'I can look after myself.' She went to work in the brake-band factory." He said abruptly, "Gees, we had a nice set-up."

"Long time between letters, eh?"

"Yeah. Yeah. Pretty soon she's taking a month off before she writes. Naw," he said, and shook his head. He resisted the bait. He couldn't lay it to Gladys. Gladys was okay. He bent down as if to jump.

"I don't know," he said slowly coming up straight. "When I get up here after Tunisia and went airborne I started hankering for the kitchen and her sitting across the table, me just back from work. We always have two bottles of ale in the Frigidaire. I don't have to look. I reach in and feel the cap on the quart bottle and there she's set out two glasses and the bottle opener. I always do the opening, see." Again he posed for a jump, and didn't. "You know, I get to thinking about that Frigidaire and by Jesus I almost bust out crying. A thing like that."

"You didn't marry the English girl?" I almost felt relief.

"Just like I'm telling you. Naw. That's what gets me. She don't ask a thing. Don't tell me she's going to have a kid." He changed from one to the other without batting an eye. It wasn't glibness. This I knew like you know fire when you stick your hand in it. They were symbols, the same symbol—the true symbol. I felt better. "Not till it's born, four months ago," he said. "Then I had to wait till now. Funniest damn thing!" He felt better. "I goes up there yesterday sore as hell. It all boiled up in me soon as I got moving. Why didn't she do something, I says. Why didn't she say? But she don't tell me. She says in the letter, 'I didn't want to worry you.' She says somebody told her

the country needs kids." The present tense was coming in more now. I smiled—at his delicate effort to approximate her way of expression. "Somebody says to her Yanks don't make bad fathers. You hear about the Quads? Yeah, an American, too." We both felt much better. Then he said, "Point is, when I see the kid, and she says he's got the same name as me, Alfred, well Jesus I felt like some guy. I meant something, see?" We rode in. If ever I've seen anyone look like hell it was Alfred.

The train entered the shabby station which stank of fish. The passengers stumbled out on the platform stiff-legged. They surged onward to find transportation all over again, a dreary routine. I managed to get the driver of a vintage Austin to take the cap off his meter-flag and postpone his supper. He drove me downtown and then took Alfred on to Victoria, minus the jumpboots.

"Guess they'll give me a new pair for D-Day."

As he said it, something cut me out. Maybe he felt me feeling cut out. He read something in my face. He grabbed my hand and then I read something in his face. He said, "That's alright, mister. I figure my number's coming up this time and that's okay by me," and was gone.

MECHANICAL PROGRESS AND THE ARTS

Robert Gow

THE relations between science and art have recently received much attention—but mainly on the general philosophic level. The inquiry has sought to define the spheres of action, to consider science and art as alternative or complementary methods of apprehending reality. But science and art come together in all sorts of every-day matters, which are mostly ignored by the general inquiries. For instance, there is the important relation between technology and the art which is embodied in things of ordinary use—pottery, tables, chairs, houses.

Those who raise the problems of this relationship are mainly those who admire the skill and taste put into the utilities of the past, but who moan that nothing artistic is produced nowadays. Modern industrial development, they complain, has "least cost" as its overriding consideration. Hence the mass-production techniques, which provide articles in which the needs of utility and cheapness banish those of beauty. Two hundred years of this process, they say, with its recently rapid acceleration, have almost eliminated any sort of æsthetic satisfaction from ordinary living.

Wistfully they imagine a golden age before this happened, and they say: "If you want living art, vital and strong in ordinary life, you must go back." And since anyone with any sense knows that we cannot go back, their counsel is one of despair.

Now such people are writing and thinking from a point of view which is at least implicitly anti-democratic and anti-human. No true humanist, however much he may admire the treasures of the past, can fail to reflect that the proportion of the human population which had access to them was very small. More important, if he has any grasp of the physical horror of disease and filth, of deliberate cruelty, and inescapable misery, even of the casual, inevitable suffering arising from continual consumption of rotting food, he cannot but welcome the technological advances which have made possible the reduction of these horrors. For him, the realisation of the potential dignity and beauty in the human being is the main task of history, and he rejoices in works of art partly because they reveal human possibilities. But just because of this, he has a more fundamental interest in the problem of whether art in useful objects is *necessarily* suppressed by technological development. Or rather such an enunciation of the problem is absurd to him; he knows there is no necessity about it. The problem is to understand why there has been a tendency towards such suppression, and hence to find means of preventing it.

Aesthetic activity, in creation or in appreciation, is an essential part of humanity, and must be fully operative in a complete human society, whatever its technological

state. The humanist agrees with the backward-looking æsthete about the shoddy articles which many of us have grown used to accept, and is equally bitter about the ugly mess which has accompanied much industrial development. He knows also that the machine age is one of the most important factors which have contributed to the present situation, but realises that it is no use simply blaming the machines for lowering æsthetic standards without understanding precisely how they have managed to do so, and trying from that to anticipate and to control the further development.

The tables and chairs, pots and pans, earthenware utensils, all the beautiful and finely patterned objects over which collectors now go into rhapsodies, were made by artisans who had acquired such skill as to have complete mastery of their material. They could, by taking sufficient time, and using the full knowledge of their craft, do anything they liked with their material.

Such a statement seems obvious, and yet it seems that its implications have not been fully grasped. How satisfying were the jars and vessels being made only 200 years after men first learnt to fire clay? Men had certainly practised firing for very many years before the first civilisations whose pottery is admired. I suggest that this situation has been paralleled by Western civilisation in the beginnings of the machine age.

Consider for a moment what skill really is. A good working definition would be that it is the ability to control the processes by which one works. Now the pre-machine craftsman worked with his limbs, using simple tools, and he had gained a precise knowledge of his working processes, i.e., he knew exactly how to control his muscular movements and reactions along with these tools—he had direct sensory knowledge of these working processes. But the first engines were made and worked while our knowledge of the fundamental physical laws governing their behaviour was extremely slight. We had as little control over what we could make our machines do as the earliest men had over their tools. Our skill with machines was in fact negligible. The craftsman with full control over his muscles could embody a

broad and selective imaginative range, but early machine-man could not.

But there was another distinction of equal importance, in the amount of energy which respectively they could use. The craftsman could use only a small amount of energy in a very precise way, but the machines could use a large amount, taking it from coal and water, far in excess of the craftsman, and yet could only use it very roughly. We could produce much, but without the necessary control involved in attaining æsthetic satisfaction. Only increase in our skill could bring us to that stage. And in this connection what is meant by skill in the modern age must be thought of very widely. When we began to use coal for power we could only use it directly to make a piston move to and fro. Wherever we wanted power we had to build a fire, a chimney stack, spew out smoke, and generally make a mess. We built them all over, lots of messy little engines. But later we found that with a specially big fire and engine in one place we could make electric power and distribute it by wire. As with power, so with heat. We found how to make gas and distribute it by pipe. These were advances in "skill" in the sense which is relevant to modern conditions—our general knowledge of the way to use the fundamental physical phenomena with which we now work.

In fact, since we have become machine-users, i.e., have based our future development upon the exploitation of the naturally available energy in our environment (and of course we had always done that as much as we could), our skill is in fact our knowledge of applied science. The new situation created in the industrial revolution was that one increment in a centuries-old accumulation of natural knowledge released a supply of energy which was immense compared with human or animal labour-power. But as nearly all the previous accumulation was relevant only to the use of such labour power, no adequate guide or control was available for the new energy. In a sense it exploded, like a volcano, leaving its lava in immense slag heaps and the grotesque ruins of old factories, and its craters in the ruined pit-

shafts, with a deadly deposit of ashes and corrosive dust on most of our environment.

It is, of course, true that the results were aggravated because the complete lack of the type of skill appropriate to its use was paralleled by the lack of an economic organisation able to cope with it. Private greed, which was limited in its effects previously so far as æsthetics were concerned because it had operated upon sufficiently skilled traditional craftsmanship, retained the power to set this tremendous new energy into motion as, where, and how, it pleased. But it is important not to fall into the error of blaming greed, as such, for the unpleasant æsthetic results. The skill just wasn't available.

There are clearly many signs that we are regaining lost ground. The design of a modern turbo-alternator is pleasing to our sense of beauty in a way that the beam engine was not. I have already mentioned the beneficial effects of distributing energy in the electrical form. At the power stations themselves we now know enough about precipitation of solid particles to reduce the smoke nuisance from large chimneys to almost zero. From coal itself, via the modern gas, coke-oven, and chemical industries, we have learnt to get a variety of materials for a variety of uses. Even a single development in metallurgy, that of stainless steel, has made possible cutlery which is far superior in appearance to that of our ancestors. The possibilities of that much-talked-of field, plastics, together with modern metallurgical knowledge in housing and furniture construction are obviously very great, in spite of the ludicrous tendency at present to interpret them always in some "streamlined," "modernist," form. That is partly a result of fashion, and partly a result of confusing them with the engineering industry from which they have come. It is only slightly due to limitations in material or technique.

Obviously, therefore, there are plenty of signs that we have reached the stage when we can indeed begin to concern ourselves with embodying æsthetic satisfactions in the things of our everyday life. And yet it is surely equally obvious that we have not, to any large extent, begun to do so. These signs are really signs; they

indicate what is latent. They have to be looked for, or pointed out. But there is still no general consciousness that æsthetic satisfactions are being met.

I have spoken above of using skill to embody things which had been imagined. This was what the craftsman did, and what the machine age had not sufficient skill to do at its beginning. Now in using that form of expression, I was separating imagination from skill. Such a separation is legitimate only for the requirements of logical discussion, and provided it is corrected by realising that in practise the two are subtly interconnected. Imagination is influenced by the environment, of which one's own work as well as the evidence of the work of other people around us forms an important part. The craftsmen of the late pre-machine age—remembering that in the human scale of time the ancient Egyptians were late pre-machine age—were the inheritors of a long tradition of embodying imaginative venture in their work, and lived in the environment so created. The imaginative life was there although so far as human happiness was concerned, it was frustrated by the general physical misery of existence.

To overcome that, the machine energy was needed, but when it was obtained it was not under control. Now imagination and environment are closely inter-related, and so if the environment is such that imagination is not, or cannot be, continually exercised, it may dwindle away, become atrophied. A long time, measured in units of goods produced, has been spent in acquiring the skill appropriate to the machine-energy which could produce so much; a long time during which the main technological status of our society has been so little skilled that it could not use imagination freely. And during this time we have become unused to imaginative venture. Now that our increasing skill could permit greater imaginative freedom, we may have lost the power to do so, or may only be able to do it very slowly. This is the secondary effect which the machine-age has had upon us, and its importance for us is quite as great as the first.

The situation is made clearer if we consider the “non-utility” arts, all the stimulation to be obtained from music, drama, poetry, literature generally, painting,

and sculpture. The mere recitation of this list reveals another aspect of the situation, because these are the things which are often grouped together under the word "culture," and made the basis of the vicious division of highbrow and lowbrow. The origin of this separation is that the reduction of imaginative venture referred to in the previous paragraph was an *average for our society as a whole*, and like any other average there was a distribution to each side of it. For the majority of people, imaginative activity fell away with the industrial revolution, because the environment to which the majority were exposed was not such as to promote its exercise. But for a minority there was either an increase or a much less serious fall.

Thus in the era from 1750 to 1900, music and painting and literature developed as an upper-class interest, divorced from the main life of the people. In the early stages, from Haydn and Mozart up to Liszt, the effect of this separation on the art itself was not marked, but later the reduction in strength and vigour consequent upon separation from the bulk of contemporary human living became apparent. It was always mitigated to some extent by the deplorable tendency of artists to live "unrespectable" lives. No such mitigating influence was effective upon the upper-class audience and the "critics" whom they relied upon to talk about and interpret art to them. The consequence was that obligatory, repetitive, no-enjoyment-in-the-belly, kind of tremendous facade of gushing, superficial, socially-musical appreciation and artistic interest, which is still to be found in our programme notes for concerts, catalogues for Academy shows, and the critical articles in the national newspapers.

In brief, while the works of art themselves were not distinctively affected until the later stage, even the strongest of the early post-industrial revolution work, like Beethoven in music and Blake in poetry, have been submerged and hidden in a mist of ethereality. The difficulty for the working man in finding the values in the arts, already made great by the lack of imaginative content in his working life, was made almost insuperable

by enclosure in pretentious nonsense which he could not but find distasteful.

Broadly, then, our society is stratified in respect of imaginative activity into two classes, the cultured and the uncultured, roughly correlated with the economic and social stratification. The cultured tends to become conventional, a thing of *comme il faut* and snobbery, wherein appreciation lacks gusto and life. The uncultured has life which can neither express nor become aware of itself, other than in a vague, but none the less bitter, hostility to what it calls highbrow. But into this antagonism the modern development of the very industrial revolution which initiated it brings a new factor, the possibility of æsthetic satisfaction being restored—indeed increased beyond any historically previous level—to ordinary life.

The resulting dialectics can already be seen working themselves out. The present-day revival of and spread of interest in the arts in the various workers' movements comes from no random idealistic development, but in large part because of the material circumstance that æsthetic satisfaction in the things of everyday life is now technologically possible. The other main cause is also of course material in origin, but it acts indirectly, and I shall discuss it later. Meanwhile we can see the foregoing factors interacting, the dawning discovery of beauty in modern domestic ware, fabrics, and structural materials, starting an interest in applied art which spreads to other arts. In reverse, the pure artist comes into the field of design; comes now because the technical stage is set for his entrance. Then come the reactions, the interest in fine arts once begun feeding back into the awareness of everyday life to encourage the search for greater satisfactions there.

Now to the other cause referred to above. The same industrial development of our society has reached a stage where the pressure of events on humanity is intense, and human reactions to it are equally intense. War on a terrifying scale has become a persistent threat and has been a present reality. A deep political consciousness has been created: a consciousness of wrong, of

expropriation, of potentialities unfulfilled for good and vast for evil. Some men are driven by the severity of their own experiences to seek for satisfying expressions of similar experience, in the hope of finding the significance of their lives. Contemporary artists, who feel with their fellows the pressure of events, make articulate what others cannot themselves express, but to which they can respond. Attention goes also to the work of artists in particular eras of the past, who have been preoccupied with similar problems in human reality.

Such is one aspect of the second source of contemporary interest in the arts. The other aspect comes to the same thing in the end, although it begins differently. Other men try to escape from the intensity surrounding them, and they, too, turn to art—to the ivory-tower refinement—to the factory-girl novelette. But there are strong forces which tend to press those who approach via the escapist reaction into the other group who seek for awareness and understanding. And where the two streams meet appears clearly in that main outcome of industrial development, the conscious social and political organisation of the workpeople.

Young people who join for the fun of drama leagues, for music and literature to "take them out of themselves," find that what was supposed to be a game, or what was taught at school as a pleasant but superficial veneer upon the important life of commerce, is regarded as of high intrinsic value by leading people in the movement. Instead of being taken out of themselves in the way they had anticipated, they learn to study themselves and the world problems via the human assessments made in the arts. No account of contemporary interest in the arts can be complete without recognition of this effect of the conscious attitude adopted by the working-class movement in all its various sects.

It is true that the attitude is often accompanied by a naïvety which earns for it the scorn of the sophisticated critic when he is unsympathetic to the social situation, and exasperates beyond patience some of those who claim to be sympathetic. But the artist whose heart is really with the people, who does comprehend their

situation and their difficulties, will keep his patience. He will not, however, fall into the opposite error of regarding popular naïve judgment as a mystic *vox dei* with an infallible nose for truth and merit. But he will realise that from naïvety something vital can grow, and he will interest himself in its growth and try to contribute to it. He will make no spurious efforts to write down, or cheapen his work. But he will accept without condescension the people's immediate need for something simpler than his own expression. He will actively work with them to improve appreciation, accepting that the people must begin from the point where they actually are, not from that where he would like them to be. But he must also fight for a steady advance, and must never out of motives of expedience accept a debasement of critical values. Such behaviour is the only valid solution to his problem, the characteristic dilemma for the contemporary artist. "Writing down" is a betrayal of art, and to separate oneself is a betrayal of democracy. To believe that the betrayal of one is not in the long run a betrayal of the other, is a betrayal of humanism.

I can now return to the theme of the æsthete's outcry against the machine age. He may begin with the best of motives, seeing in the machines a large cause of the people's plight. But his failure to understand the situation as I have tried to analyse it makes him fail to see why people are proud of the machines, and he looks backward instead of forward. The artist who claims that his concern is with human reality must realise that machines, the science and rationality which have created them, are themselves a product of part of the soul of man. Ordinary folk have a strong intuitive realisation that, despite the purpose for which the machines have been used, they represent a tremendous achievement, of which we have a real right to be proud. The intuitive realisation is equally strong that the solution is not to throw away the machines but to make them subservient to human life, to integrate the rational attitude of science with the extra-rational material of human experience. A large part of the life and study of an artist to-day should be devoted to the problems of that integration.

PAUL GAUGUIN AND THE LEGEND

Hubert Nicholson

WHEN Paul Gauguin was driven by poverty, sickness, and the callous dishonesty of supposed friends to a horrible and unsuccessful attempt to poison himself, he wrote (1897): "The time will come when people will think I am a myth, or rather an invention of the press."

The prophecy has come true, in a different sense from his; for even men who hate and distrust art will love a legend (the oldest form of art). As Gauguin's son, Emile, rightly says, the legend is unfortunately better known than the paintings. Far better known, also, than that brilliant book, *The Intimate Journal of Paul Gauguin*, which is dynamite enough to destroy the legend, if it were widely read, even without the abundant evidence of other witnesses, available elsewhere.

The story, "fantastic and untrue," as Emile Gauguin says, that one night a respectable, harmless citizen "shed all his domestic virtues in his sleep and awoke an inhuman monster," has the quality of fairy tale; metamorphosis, witchcraft, the casting of spells; Beauty and the Beast. But delights are usually drowned in vulgarity when a fairy tale is transposed into modern life (Cinderella in Hollywood terms, for example).

The biggest single contribution to the misrepresentation of Gauguin's life and character has been Somerset Maugham's best-selling novel, *The Moon and Sixpence*, and the film and radio versions of it. Maugham does not call his Strickland a portrait, but says (preface to collected edition) "This novel was suggested by the life of Paul Gauguin . . . I met men who had known him and worked with him . . . I heard much about him. . . . When I went to Tahiti, it was with the notion of finding out what I could of Gauguin's life, and here again I came across a number of persons who had been more or less connected with him. At last I found myself ready to write the novel I had so long contemplated." In saying so much, he accepts a certain responsibility. Further,

the Penguin edition is introduced to the mass public with the words, "The author has had in mind in writing the book the story of Paul Gauguin's exotic life in the South Seas." Beyond question, the popular mind has accepted Maugham's version, and Strickland equals Gauguin.

The story, described as "a study in the artistic temperament," tells of a London stockbroker in middle life, a dull dog with a nice literary wife, who abandons wife and job and runs away alone to Paris. There he paints without training, without encouragement, without recognition; behaves with crude brutality to his friends, for art's sake, not sparing himself; goes to the South Seas, lives with a faithful native mistress, dies of leprosy; but punishes the world by making his wife burn down his hut after his death, thus destroying his greatest masterpieces, which are frescoed on the walls.

This unpleasant novelette travesties art and the artist in general, and the life and outlook of Gauguin in particular; heaven knows why, for the real story is infinitely more interesting, more genuinely dramatic, and of course more "convincing." Pola Gauguin says, in *My father, Paul Gauguin*: "In Somerset Maugham's novel, *The Moon and Sixpence*, mother did not find a single trait of Strickland which had anything at all in common with her husband."

Gauguin's letters and journals and Robert Burnett's straight factual biography make it perfectly clear that Gauguin did not in fact make any sudden leap into art; did not run away from his wife in pursuit of the divine something-or-other of romantic novelettes; was not brutal in his sexual relationships; was not by any means unrecognised by people of eminence and repute; did not "go native" in the islands in any real sense or give up his civilised and intellectual attitudes.

Was he a sensualist, even a little of a *voyeur*? Yes—like many another great artist. But he was not "white cargo," was not a "jig-chaser"; did not prefer Polynesian girls because they were coloured, but because they were kind. Mette, his wife, had virtues, but she was not conspicuously kind. As for his other mercenary

Parisian loves, they took much but gave him little except the syphilis which he contracted in 1894 and which killed him in 1903.

(The cause of his death is, I know, disputed. John Gould Fletcher says it is established beyond doubt that it was "simple syncope of the heart." But one can hardly doubt that the diseased condition of the whole organism, long neglected, lay behind the immediate cause, whatever that might be. Burnett says, without reservation, that syphilis killed him.)

A point reiterated in the Maugham novel is that its hero, like men of the Hemingway school, is monosyllabic, barely articulate: his commonest phrase is "Go to hell." The real Gauguin was one of the most explicit of painters, both about the purposes and intentions of his art and about his aims and opinions in life. His scattered, but not insubstantial writings have insight, poetry, and profundity. The fundamental distortion in the novel is that of depicting him as a "typical" Englishman (before the metamorphosis). He was not even a typical Frenchman. He was partly Spanish; blood of Montezuma was reputed to run in his veins. Part of his childhood he lived in Peru, with a negress for playmate, in a surrealist house with a madman chained on the roof.

He had ancestors of exceptional and eccentric quality, like his grandmother, Flora Tristan, a revolutionary orator who made a great impression in the industrial districts of France, and whom Proudhon described as a genius.

It is a curious reflection that we deem an existence "normal" if it is divided between the well-known habits of suburbia and the financial abstractions of the bourse. From Gauguin's point of view, his career as a stockbroker must certainly have seemed the most unnatural and unreal section of his life.

Before he became a stockbroker he had been for six years a sailor, first mercantile, then naval. He was for a time a stoker on a cruiser. It was from a shipmate that he first heard of the delights of Oceania, and he treasured the sailor's words in his memory.

He parted from his wife, Mette, and his family in Copenhagen in 1885, hoping to raise some money that would enable them to be reunited as soon as possible. He corresponded with Mette for twelve years, and only towards the end of that time, when disease, as well as distance, had intervened, did he finally give up hope of a reunited home and a placid old age in his native France. Despite his succession of Tahitian households, he had in that time sent Mette 4,000 francs in cash and given her pictures and property which he estimated at 30,000 francs.

So much for the "desertion" of his wife. There is much more that could, of course, be said about this undoubtedly unsuccessful marriage; the point here is that there was no such sudden abandonment or change of heart on Gauguin's part as the legend suggests.

The painter in *The Moon and Sixpence* is made to say, immediately after leaving his wife (without even his address):

"I've supported her for seventeen years—why shouldn't she support herself for a change? . . . let her try."

An argument with something of a Shavian ring—but certainly not the attitude of Gauguin.

He wrote to Mette from Tahiti: "My kisses to the dear children, and for you the best of them, from your faithful lover and husband. . . . Don't think I am selfish and that I am abandoning you forever, but let me live for a time like this. . . . I think tenderly of you." This, apparently, in all sincerity, even though absence and mutual misunderstandings eventually divorced their hearts.

The sexual tendencies attributed to the painter in *The Moon and Sixpence* are singularly nasty. He tells his interlocutor (the "I" of the story): "I haven't got time for that sort of nonsense . . . all that business fills me with disgust;" and he acquiesces silently in this description of himself: "You seem to walk with your head among the stars. And then, all of a sudden you can't stand it any more . . . you find some woman, coarse and low and vulgar, some beastly creature in whom all

the horror of sex is blatant, and you fall upon her like a wild animal. You drink till you're blind with rage."

This has contributed to a very unjust side of the myth. There is abundant evidence that Gauguin did not regard his women as "low" or "beastly"; nor could he have spoken of the "horror" of sex; still less did it make him "blind with rage." These are Maugham's own imaginings.

We get more of them as the novel goes on:

"With Strickland the sexual appetite took a very small place. It was unimportant. It was irksome . . . he hated the instincts that robbed him of his self-possession. I think even he hated the inevitable partner in his debauchery"—and so on.

Proposing to his native wife, Strickland is made to say: "I shall beat you . . ."

"How else should I know you loved me?" she answered.

Very well, it is fiction, and not very important fiction; but it has contributed to the Gauguin legend.

Let us look into this question of beating and sex-brutality. His biographer (Burnett) retells (from *Noa-Noa*), the touching little scene when Gauguin found that his native wife had had a lover while he was out fishing with the men in the canoes. It was a situation in which many a conventional husband might have beaten his wife without incurring much criticism from his fellows.

When he accused her, Tehura stood up, naked, in the middle of their room and recited a prayer. Then, with eyes full of tears, she said: "You must beat me, beat me for a long time. Otherwise you will be angry for a long time, and then you will be ill."

Gauguin kissed her and repeated to her the words of Buddha: "Violence must be overcome with gentleness; evil with goodness; falsehood with truth."

His instincts were important to him; he did not hate nor despise them, nor use them brutally. Like Shelley, he did "love love," even though he offered its gifts sometimes to women from whom Shelley might have shrunk away. How he hated the sly, hypocritical lusts of the respectable, in France or in the islands. Over the portico

of his house in the Marquesas he inscribed the slogan "Make love and you shall be happy." It was his challenge to the missionaries, who were breaking down the traditional innocence of the islanders, making them feel guilty, and debauching them at the same time. The bishop was a "a goat in episcopal trappings" and a secret seducer of virgins, he found.

"Ah, reader!" he wrote in his *Journal*, "You think it would be pleasant to find a tranquil corner, sheltered from evil people. Not even the island of Dr. Moreau, not even the planet Mars, offers this."

The hypocrisy of the *gendarmerie* equalled that of the missionaries.

"Look! there is little Vaitauni on her way to the river. She has the roundest and most charming breasts you can imagine. I see this golden, almost naked body, make its way towards the fresh water. Take care, dear child, the hairy *gendarme*, guardian of the public morals, who is a faun in secret, is watching you. When he is satisfied with staring, he will charge you with a misdemeanour, in revenge for having troubled his senses, and so outraged public morals. Public morals! what words! Oh! good people of the metropolis, you have no idea what a *gendarme* is in the colonies. Come here and look for yourselves: you will see indecencies of a sort you could not have imagined."

Were these the words of a man who was "going native," abandoning civilised values? Hardly; Gauguin was never more a Frenchman than in the islands—fighting law cases for the natives, appealing for justice to the travelling assize-judges, writing eloquent protests about the disgraceful methods of colonisation; it was the degradation of *both* sets of standards, the civilised and the barbaric simultaneously, and the one by the other, that appalled him.

At the very end of his book he writes: "As a man who is well informed about many of the things he has seen, read, and heard, all over the world, the civilised and the barbarous world, I have wished to write, nakedly, fearlessly, shamelessly, to write—all this. It is my right."

Writing to the Government inspectors to expose the corruption and the "reign of terror" of the *gendarmerie* in the Marquesas, he was the conscious spokesman of the real standards of civilisation, daily betrayed by the colonists; again and again he struck the note: "Is this human?"—"Is this ethical?"—"Is this legal?"

"This is a dishonour to the French Republic, and you must not be surprised if some foreigner here says to you 'I am very glad I am not a Frenchman,' while the Frenchman says to you 'I wish the Marquesas belonged to America,'" he told the inspectors. His pleas against the "white shadows" in the South Seas brought no result, except more persecution and odium for himself.

Gauguin was a man of cultured tastes which he never dreamed of abandoning. The names that catch the eye as you turn the pages of the *Journal* are Mallarmé, Confucius, Strindberg, Degas, Hokusai, Zola, Bernhardt, Baudelaire—and about each something vivid and personal, carved with his own fine hand like a gem. "What, I'm a revolutionary!" he exclaims in amazement at what some are saying about him. "I, who adore and respect Raphael?" And he says of himself: "I have gone far back, farther back than the horses of the Parthenon, as far back as the Dada of my babyhood, the good rocking-horse. I have lingered among the nymphs of Corot, dancing in the sacred wood of Ville-d'Avray."

All that the tale of Gauguin's sudden leap into art (like hitting an oil "gusher") really amounts to, is that he was rather a late starter. But some of his earliest works were praised by Manet, six or seven years before he left Mette, and in 1881 Joris-Karl Huysmans publicly prophesied that Gauguin might do for his epoch what Rembrandt had done for his. Confidence in his gifts could hardly be deemed presumption after such encouragement. He wrote to Mette, before his first trip to Tahiti:

"I wanted, in spite of the conviction that my conscience gave me, to consult others (men who count) to know if I were doing my duty. All were of the same opinion, that my business is art, it is my stock-in-trade, the future of my children, it is the honour of the name

that I have given them. . . . It's a long process, you all say, but what am I to do? I am the first to suffer. I can assure you that if the people who know said that I had no talent and that I am lazy, I would have abandoned the game long ago."

Yes, he was the first, and the last, to suffer by it all. Who was there among those who boasted of his friendship or undertook his business affairs who did not neglect, abandon, or ultimately swindle him? He was incredibly long-suffering, forgiving, and unwilling to believe ill of these false friends, these dealers and double-dealers who would not even send him paints to paint with nor a pittance for food, while his pictures were fetching good prices in Paris. Others profited, the painter starved. He wrote, bitterly, but with dignity:

"I only wish for silence, silence, and again silence. May I be allowed to die in peace, forgotten; and if I have got to live, may I be allowed even more peace, and to be even more forgotten. What does it matter if I am a pupil of Bernard or of Sérusier! If I have done some good work, nothing will tarnish it;¹ and if I have done muck, why gild it, and deceive people over the quality of the stuff? In any case society will never be able to reproach me for having taken much money from its pocket by means of lies. If I added up the number of canvases that have found buyers, the number of canvases that I have *given* would be larger than the number sold. Not that I regret this, on the contrary; if I had an income of only 3,000 francs a year in Tahiti, I would give them all away."—(Letter quoted in Burnett's *Life*.)

In 1897, when he was forced to the conclusion that his dealer had deserted him and his source of income from France had finally dried up, he sank into despair; he was a very sick man, and without enough food. But his attempted suicide with insufficient arsenic was a painful failure:

In this year he said, in another letter, "Without anyone who can obtain for me an annual pittance, what is to become of me? I can see nothing but death, that

¹ How far, this, from the fictitious Strickland ordering his masterpieces to be burnt! "Nothing will tarnish it . . ."

delivers us from everything. I owe this month 1,800 francs and have no more credit. It is true that I am a creditor in Paris for 2,500 francs, plus my paintings, plus my collection, plus a balance with Vollard (I believe), plus 1,400 francs from Morice, according to Chaudet's accounts in a letter of six months ago. But since no one will pay me, I have only debts, and in the future for food—? O——”

He was much more than solvent, if men had only dealt fairly and honestly with him. One cannot read the story of his miseries without an indignant realisation of this fact. It was this, the Parisian end of the business, that compelled him to say, at that point, “What a mad but sad and wretched adventure, this voyage of mine to Tahiti !” And yet few men could have made smaller material demands on life. Moreover, he was a naturally happy and high-spirited person; and his wisdom transcended bitterness. In the *Journal* he wrote: “The road grows rougher and rougher; one grows old. The memory of evil vanishes in smoke.”

The *Journal*, his book of wit, is a book of wisdom and beauty too; fragmentary by its nature, but a book of life.

“I must have everything !” he cries boyishly, “I cannot conquer everything, but I will to do so. Let me get my breath and cry once more ‘ Spend yourself, spend yourself again ! Run till you are out of breath and die madly !’ Prudence, how you bore me with your endless yawning !”

“If a work of art were a work of chance, all these notes would be useless. I believe that the thought which has guided my work is a part of my work, is mysteriously linked with a thousand other thoughts, some my own, some those of others. . . .”

“Take care not to step on the foot of a learned idiot: his bite is dangerous. . . .”

“Giant, you are mortal !—that is enough to humiliate one.”

“The censor: ‘ Pornography !’ The author: ‘ Hypocritography ! ’ ”

And here among the aphorisms and epigrams and reflective passages we find some answers to the inevitable

contemporary question: Was Gauguin an escapist? Did he evade the struggle to overthrow or transform the society he found inimical, or even to depict it in his art? Was his revolutionary grandmother a better man than he was?

For a text to this inquiry, take this passage from the *Journal*:

“ I owe a debt to society.

“ How much ?

“ How much does society owe me ?

“ A great deal too much.

“ Will it ever pay ?

“ Never ! (Liberty, equality, fraternity !) ”

One must first ask oneself why he went to the South Sea never-never-land at all. It is not enough to say that it was a matter of the palette, that his instinct was for more light and brighter colours than Europe could offer. Certainly he felt something of the kind; he found the sunny Brittany landscape an improvement on northern lands; and the influence of a travel brochure from the Great Exhibition was not so childish a reason for the South Sea voyage as it sounds. It reawoke the memories of his old shipmate's tales, and he thought of light, of colour, of arts unknown to Europe.

He wrote to a Dutch painter, ingenuously, yet prophetically: “ My mind is made up: I want soon to go to Tahiti, a little island in Oceania, where material life has no need of money. A terrible epoch is being prepared in Europe for the coming generation: the reign of gold. Everything is rotten, both men and the arts.

“ Here, one is incessantly distracted. There, at least, the Tahitian, under a summer sky and living on a wonderfully fertile soil, needs only to put out his hand to find food. Consequently he never works. Life, to the Tahitian, consists of singing and making love, so that once my material life is well organised, I shall be able to give myself up entirely to painting, free from all artistic jealousy, and without any necessity for shady dealing.”

Most of this proved illusory: the reign of gold had reached out to Tahiti; that Arcady never had been a

place where a hand stretched out could provide a livelihood—the native farming was hard work; and Gauguin had not gone there to exchange the toil of the stock exchange for the toil of the farm (though he actually made a garden and built a house with his own hands); he therefore remained almost as dependent as ever upon the picture-market, the realm of “artistic jealousy and shady dealing.” (I presume that nobody now holds that it was the business of Gauguin to do any *better* thing with his life than paint Gauguin’s pictures.)

Paris, the art capital of the world, was a cruel place to the genuine original artist who was neither a wire-puller nor a man of private means. It was systematically starving its young men of genius: the art-speculators and the dealers ruled; the market was inexorable and supreme. Gauguin had been a successful business man, able to afford Cézannes and other great contemporary works for his own collection; but having taken up the career of an artist he would not stoop to bluff, fawning, forgery, or concocting fashionable portraits or other potboilers, to make money. He did not try to “play the market.” He tried to get away from the centre of corruption; but it could not be done.

He hated the money-corruption in marriage as in art. “In this noble institution” (marriage), he wrote to Daniel de Monfried in 1899, “there is talk of nothing but duty, honour, &c. Why don’t we tell the truth, once for all? The whole question is money—prostitution, if you like. . . . It is horrible.”

Alas for Gauguin.

By the time he got to the island paradise, the great era of Tahiti, of barbaric splendour, of amazing sculpture, of fine decorative art, and of comparative social freedom, was already dying, along with the last representative of the great Pomare dynasty. Enough of it remained in art and in manners to admire, to weep for, and to defend against the ignorant and cruel philistinism of the white colonists and their missions. Where Gauguin did exaggerate the idyllic freedom of Tahiti it was in protest against the “horrible” marriage-prostitution system of

Europe which he had good reason to hate. The life of Tahiti, by no means a simple "paganism," was in a disintegrating stage. The people had, of course, had their own form of marriage, with various sexual taboos, one of which forbade men and women to eat together. Men were *ra*, or sacred, women *noa*, or profane. But their life had elements of ease and happiness which Gauguin could feel to be humanly superior to all that was represented by the intrusive priests and police. This enabled him to consolidate in human and artistic terms his revolt against the ruling class-values of France.

He painted its epitaph in his fashion in that magnificent picture, *Nevermore*, of which he said: "I wanted to suggest by means of a simple nude a certain long-lost and barbarian luxury. The whole is drowned in colours that are purposely sombre and sad. It is not the raven of Edgar Poe, but the bird of the devil that is watching."

Gauguin did not deceive himself about the state of affairs he found in Tahiti. His disillusionment did not drive him back to Europe; he reacted, as has been shown, by a vigorous protest and challenge, a sharp and spirited onslaught with the pen upon the exploiters of the islands, while with the brush he immortalised the dying glories and sought to express and perpetuate the beauty and human values of the island way of life.

Also, though at times he suffered the agonies of the damned, he had his ecstasies too, as his pictures bear clear witness; and day-to-day life had its simple happiness, when there was enough food to eat.

Enough of the old life of the islands remained to accommodate him with a series of undemanding and unmercenary mates; the community still deemed it an honour to adopt children collectively, and had no notion of illegitimacy or the dogma of fixed monogamy. But the traditional easy ways were already being overlaid absurdly with the fashions introduced by the missionaries.

Gauguin writes sardonically in his *Journal*:

"Marriage is beginning to make its appearance in this country: an attempt to regularise things."

(Gauguin was no anthropologist and showed no particular scientific interest in the history behind the

island customs; but the genial pre-Christian attitude to life and sex seemed to him essentially good.)

"Imported missionaries have set their hearts upon this singular business" (church-marriage), he said.

"The *gendarme* exercises the functions of mayor. Two couples converted to the idea of matrimony and dressed in brand-new clothes listen to the reading of the matrimonial laws; with the 'Yes' once uttered, they are married.

"As they go out, one of the two males says to the other: 'Suppose we exchange?' And very gaily each goes off with a new wife to the church, where the bells fill the air with merriment.

"The bishop, with the eloquence that characterises missionaries, thunders against adulterers, and then blesses the new union, which in this holy place is already the beginning of an adultery."

Sometimes the bridegroom went off into the bushes with one of the bridesmaids after the wedding, he says. The church rites were really little more to them than new, and exotic, excuses for festivals and ceremonials, which they loved.

The animal innocence of the "pastorale Tahitienne" was not entirely lost. In so far as he had a generous, natural response to it, Gauguin was a "savage."

Strindberg, who called him "Maître," wrote "He is the savage who hates an interfering civilisation," and Gauguin did not quarrel with the term: he replied (this was in Paris, between his South Sea voyages): "I saw you the other day in my studio, playing the guitar and singing, your northern blue eyes were looking attentively at the pictures hanging on the walls. I had a presentiment of rebellion, of a clash between your civilisation and my barbarism, a civilisation that makes you suffer, a barbarism that rejuvenates me."

The barbarism did rejuvenate him; but the civilisation reached out and destroyed him in the end. ("Syphilisation," says James Joyce.)

It would be childish to convict Gauguin of social escapism. But what of the charge of artistic escapism? There is a school of criticism that considers his paintings

nothing more than pleasant decorations, and in fact a cul-de-sac of art; those same paintings that in their day were the occasion of storms of violent feeling, something like the festival of philistia at the Picasso exhibition in London, 1945-46. The case is expressed at its crudest by Frank Rutter, thus: "He never entered into truth; he stepped into a land of dreams, and his pictures remained a convention."

Is this just to him?

The islands were no dream, they were real places inhabited by real people, and Gauguin accepted the actual state of things (and his own awakening) with more unflinching gaze than many an artist who has remained intoxicated with romance in Paris or London.

True, he restored some of the decorative factors in design that were being lost in a post-photographic age. True, he loved colour for its own sake. But he sang the glories, not of an imagined past, but of a dying present. His greatest pictures give much more than pleasure. *D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* which he painted in a state of passionate absorption, oblivious of everything but the work, is much more than a big decorative panel. It gives a simultaneously realistic and symbolic panorama of the island community, and makes it a parable of the whole *condition humaine*. Its philosophy is not that of a philosopher (the picture does not answer the questions it asks, unless it is implied that the humble self-sufficiency and continuity of the community is its own answer); but the simple, eternal questionings of a ruminating mind are the meeting point of Gauguin's nature and that of the islanders; and the picture moves on several levels at once.

Am I right in suspecting that the critics who treat Gauguin as a superficial decorator and an artistic escapist are unconsciously influenced by the vulgar legend? Any pictures painted by the Gauguin of legend would in all probability be shallow, lush, or bogus! The real ones are not.

Was it not enough that Gauguin should have been penalised so harshly by the society of his day, robbed so shamelessly by those who called themselves his friends,

cheated, not only of the rich profits of his toil, but even of bare sustenance; without the imposture of the legend now stalking in his name?

Sufficient has, I hope, been said here to show how completely false it is.

Perhaps the misrepresentation of one man, and he dead, may seem to matter little in the mountainous muck-heap of the world's wrongs. But the thing is more serious than it seems, if on the one hand it affects critical opinion, and on the other it misrepresents the nature of art and the character of an artist, taken by so many to be typical.

Gauguin was no saint, there was nothing Messianic about him; neither was he a stupid pipe-dreamer, nor an anti-social unprincipled renegade. The Gauguin of the popular caricature could no more have painted Gauguin's pictures than the Chopin of the Hollywood film could have composed Chopin's music. Since there is a huge new public for the arts in these post-war days, it is, I think, of real importance that misconceptions of this kind should be exposed and destroyed. The members of this new public have a natural desire to know what kind of men and women make the pictures and music and poetry which have arrested their attention; how like or unlike themselves the creators in art may be. They are entitled to the truth; which will the better enable them to come face to face with the meaning of art.

PHILIP HESELTINE

Victor Carne

I FIRST met P.H. at a studio party, and the only thing I remember of him—and in fact of the party—was his attempt to sober up a young artists' model by plunging her into a bath of cold water. (Memory insists that the model was in the altogether at the time!) I think this episode could be said to typify a great deal of Heseltine's life and musical (in a critical sense) activities. He was continually plunging the British public into cold baths.

The great B.P. needed toning up in musical sense. It was necessary to arouse a greater sense of musical appreciation and pride in the achievement of British composers. A great deal has been written of his affinity to the Elizabethans. I feel that if the great period in British music had been the Victorian or Edwardian then H. would have appeared as one with them. He had no time for people who attempted to cover up their own ignorance with platitudes. The type of critic he disliked was the one who knew all the dates and pretended that this gave him authority for anything more than to supply dates! Too many critics had not the capacity to appreciate the musical worth of new works and therefore sat on the fence—not daring to offer a definite opinion.

This contention he was never tired of voicing (and it was a very sonorous and clear voice!) particularly if the offending critic were within earshot. On one occasion H. and I were due to broadcast a programme of Elizabethan songs—he was to talk about the songs, and whilst waiting, he approached various members of the B.B.C. staff to sign a petition calling for the removal of a well-known music critic who was then the musical adviser of the B.B.C. The fact that the critic in question was in the room did not deter H. from voicing his opinion or induce him to modify the references to the musical capacity of the offending critic.

On another occasion I was with him at a concert given by the International Contemporary Music Society. It was a fine summer's afternoon and H. overheard a well-known critic remark: "What a pity to have to spend such an afternoon in this stuffy atmosphere when one could enjoy the concert in the open air at Lord's!" This, to H., was sufficient reason to send the first of a series of famous postcards, together with bellows, with full instructions on the best method to get the maximum amount of fresh air.

I once told him I was studying some Hugo Wolf songs—his remark was the suggestion that when singing Wolf the vocalist should get well behind the accompanist, or, better still, under the piano!

He seemed to have a nose for detecting insincerity in

both composer and critic. There was a certain composer whose work he did not greatly value—but whose sincerity he liked. He once said to me that this composer's works were all blue-printed first and then constructed on an architectural plan—the scores looked so symmetrical on paper. When he was resting at Eynsford (he had broken his leg when stepping out of a train at Eynsford station)—he proudly pointed out one of this composer's thick volumes supporting the foot of his divan—"At last I have found the true value of his compositions." It was on this occasion that he went into a detailed explanation to convince me he was sober at the time of the accident—because, as he triumphantly claimed, "no drunken man ever hurts himself when he falls." This was sufficient proof for him to suggest that one should be drunk if one has to get out of trains on the wrong side late at night and in darkness.

In view of the success of limited society recordings, it is interesting to note that as early as 1926 H. suggested getting hold of a recording plant for the purpose of recording and issuing for special subscription albums of Elizabethan songs. I remember these were to include some of the more bawdy ones and nothing would convince him that there might be difficulties in the way of publication. Later, in about 1929, he asked me to try and get him a post at the Columbia Graphophone Co. It was essential for him to have a regular income and he was prepared to write all the notes for the classic standard issues—advise on classic recordings, and as a start, to conduct for nothing his own "Capriol Suite." The only condition was that he must be allowed to do the work outside office routine and he promised to produce the work punctually. All he asked as salary was £5 per week. I always think it was one of the major tragedies of British music that for some reason this was not done. The value of those notes would have been very great. He seemed a strangely subdued Peter Warlock (as he was then) when I met him by appointment at Tottenham Court Road. He came with me to the Columbia offices in Clerkenwell Road and I introduced him to some of the managers, who I thought might help. Unfortunately

this was not to be. He was so keen on getting the position that he seriously asked me if I thought his chances would be increased if he were to shave his beard ! I saw him a few times after this—one of the last occasions being at the “ Antelope ” in Sloane Square. When I asked him what compositions he had written he shook his head, and with his charming smile said (as near as I can remember these were his actual words): “ I have nothing more to say—my work is finished—and when one has finished the only thing to do is—exit.”¹

In retrospect, the great and unalterable theme of Peter Warlock’s life seemed to me to be his honesty in music. He would not, and did not tolerate insincere or patronising critics. That P.H. died before his time I am certain of—and I often wonder what would have happened if he had been engaged to work for the Columbia Company. Even if he had not stayed long, what a legacy it would have been for record buyers: to have had the great value of his supervision of classic recordings and the extraordinary interest of his notes on classic works.

MOMENTARY RETURN TO A LOST VALLEY

Maurice Carpenter

I AM standing on a bit of the North Downs, overlooking the Weald of Kent and Surrey.

Not for the first time. As a boy I clambered down these steep sides, or rolled down old motor tyres, to see them leap the hawthorn bushes below; and again to labour with them up the chalky path worn through the grass. Or, in winter, when each lump of chalk wore a beard of ice, and the surface like the slipway for a ship, came to toboggan dangerously on pieces of board, usually containing hidden nails, so that our trousers gained triangular jags, and we walked home self-consciously, with our hands behind our backs.

¹Please do not treat conversational remarks in “ quotes ” as actual words; after this long interval I can only guarantee that they are truly the sense of his statements if not his actual words.

Down below, across a field which usually lay fallow, but sometimes bore a crop of clover or wheat, lies a hollow, wooded marsh, known locally as Viper's Hollow. It has now been drained, and I can remember the time when, one evening, when dark was falling, I went down to get specimens of mare's-tail, and just avoided stumbling into trenches six feet deep, guided by the instinct one gains from a boyhood in the country.

Now, it is an ordinary wood, with a pond. Perhaps the sedges still have nests for moorhens, and the surrounding trees hollows for woodpeckers. Perhaps, still, lizards lurk in the grass. Once, I remember, there were secret tunnels through the rank grass where snakes slid and mysterious creatures moved. Once, hidden so that it was almost impossible to find it if you did not know, there was a vast clearing in the wood, carpeted with the rare Birds' Nest Orchid, a saprophytic plant with no green, living on the humours of the earth, its petals shaping a cupped birds' nest, its stamens making a cluster of four eggs.

Round the hollow was a barbed-wire fence. On it a keeper would hang carcasses of jays and other predatory birds. Wanton nastiness, even though they did harm. And once he infuriated me, for I found impaled there a brown owl, just dead. The brown owl does no harm except to its legitimate prey, the field mouse, and to shoot it shows mere lust for killing. He used to frighten us by flourishing his gun, and when he fired we used to imagine the shot whistling round our ears and legs.

The countryside is now even more cluttered with barbed-wire fences, round land that seems useless for anything except to wander at pleasure, or for botanising. The truth is, speculators enclose the land, hoping the price will rise, and they can build on it.

I remember how a six-foot intermeshed wire fence was placed round a piece of rough, tuften grassland, with straggly woods and disused chalk-pits where the brilliant sky-blue viper's bugloss grew, dusty with powdery chalk. With a penny we found we could undo a strand of the wire, and so slide sections of the fence back like a curtain.

The chalk-pits were called Devil's and Demon's crags.

Down them we would slide, and perform perilous mountaineering expeditions. At the foot of one, we imagined, a murder had been committed, and owing to the strange acoustics of the crag, the cries of the victims echoed eternally around, recurring every Thursday precisely at twelve.

There are many legends of this country. For instance, the Folly Tower, now a hollow shell, through which absent bells would echo every hour; for the bell-tower was tuned to the echo of a clock the other side of the valley. An old man was supposed to have lived there, ward to a young girl whom he violated, and whose screams he drowned by the tolling of the bell.

And in this country the pustules of speculative building, of "development," creep over the land. I remember as a child walking along newly laid paving stones, exulting rather grimly in a new garden-city. Gardens were livid with dahlias. At the end of each parallel strip of garden was a perambulator, and one baby took up the burden from another, so that it rose and fell continuously. At that moment I had my first feeling of revolt from my mother.

I ascended the road through the part of the village my father called Toytown, a collection of bungalows spoiling the slope of the hill. Reaching the top I overlooked the whole village. The new Boots', Woolworth's, and cinema were already clashing their lights upon my weak eyes, their lurid colours paled, for it was yet day.

I looked upward, and saw the road disappear gradually as it passed the asbestos bungalows, the grass creeping over it like a green mist so that it crawled more and more self-effacingly; diving down at last into the luxuriant tunnel of woods. I was reminded of an illustrated version of Dante's Inferno I had been forbidden to look at; and as I followed, it seemed as if I were immediately reduced in size, so that I could hide under the smallest beech-leaf.

Fearful forms were around me, so that, now I had revolted from my mother, I had consciously to conquer fear. I did this by contemplating the appearance of this wood from an upper-window at home. It resembled the bushy head of a prize-fighter, now ludicrously half-

denuded by the speculative builder, so that it seemed as if the barber, shaving that head, had allowed the razor to slip.

Suddenly I came out in the open, upon a new and remote world. It was the lawn of a derelict mansion, and a large notice board marked "Private" was evident even in the darkness. Fear was with me again, in part an embodiment of the proprietor of this place, an ogre who did not want me there. Either because I was paralysed, or because of a pride that, even in the weakest, sometimes does not allow concessions to fear, I did not move, but remained there, with my knees drawn up to my chin. This controlled my shivering a little, as I watched the unblinking blind holes of the windows of the mansion, the eyes of a dead man. My fear was a quiescent animal; I contemplated him calmly, and when I got up he walked amicably by my side. I learned to know him intimately, each one of his vagaries. There was complete silence. Though I was only a hundred yards from an inhabited cottage and a busy main road, for a moment I knew nothing of them.

I do not know what initial impulse released me from this calm intimacy with fear. Perhaps the whistle of a train, or a sudden flash from an aeroplane beacon just over the horizon. I only know that as I slipped down the bank on to the drive of the house my fear rose quietly behind me like a giant man, irresistibly pounded after me on noiseless heavy immense feet, so that I ran, and by a miracle escaped into the lighted and thinly-peopled high-street.

Then I laughed. How I laughed and leered at myself in shop windows, in the way cronies do after they have shared a lewd experience. I, who imagined myself running back in tears to my mother, succumbing into her immense arms, now sauntered in, gay and wayward, and hurt her by refusing to allow her to kiss me good-night.

All these emotions of my growth here merge into this present. A mist lies over the Weald, and the wide Weald comes up, mysterious dark pines on the ridge piercing the white canopy, slate roofs of Godstone peering through. It is January. A new emotion wells up inside me, misty, vague as the scene, powerful. Pains of a growing human.

This January morning, the wintry sun comes out, cold and gay, making the birch trees flash. I remember the spring cascades, and the summer luxury. I remember the brief spring when the world lived here for me, when schooldays were forever over, and the world was to begin. When the clouds of the mind, of the town, did not shut out the sunny valleys.

That year more orchids than ever bloomed in water-tower valley: bed of an ancient stream dried up for centuries, crowned by the tower that gave it its name, a tower that looked for acres over the Weald, symbol and landmark for us when we walked there.

The year before, in late summer, fire had caught the dried grass of the valley, threatened the bordering woods. We were kept on the peak of excitement, for we lived on the edge of the wood, waiting, dressed and ready to evacuate; buckets of water, damped mattresses, and turfs ready for the roof, in case the fire should spread.

That summer I left school, ready for a job that would carry me upward to success. Winter and spring I was idle. And the burnt grass fertilised the valley, which in spring grew lush again. She and I walked knee-deep, leaping over tufts and hillocks.

They sit always in the corner of the choir, half hidden by the lintel of the pulpit. Hidden also by a certain Sunday demureness that is not wholly opaque, for the eyes like clear windows pierce it. I can discern ribaldry as they exchange glances. I long to be included in their circle of secret laughter.

Pandora's eyes are pools of dark laughter, their deeps very still, flecked with strange birds, but on the surface rippling and scintillating. When she looks at you the flick of her eyelid seems to draw you inside. She seems to have a third, lateral eyelid like a dove, which flickers across her eye like faint summer lightning.

As yet I knew nothing of this, and she knew nothing of my existence. Or did I see, at times, the briefest shy flash in my direction as I sat, in the third pew from the front, miserable because I was outside their laughter, yet happy in being able to observe it?

Pandora ! Did I know her name then ? Perhaps I arrived at it by intuition. But no, her name was born from my imagination. Only she of the three seems real; the others, her sisters, are only lovely phantoms. Or do I select her from the three because she is dark, brown; because I discern in her something strange, awry—a hidden unhappiness that bursts out in gusts of laughter? Is she, like me, a jester because of an inner sickness? The others are really happy; so happy that they appear winged, and not bound to the earth. If I were to dream of them all, she would walk by my side, while the others, bright accompanying angels clothed in blue and gold, would encircle our heads.

The hymns make wings, and up there in the rafters our voices mingle together, a rich dark contralto, two bright sopranos, and my own thin tenor. Easily separable, this four-stranded melody, from the muddy grunts and refined pipings of the rest of the congregation. My voice has no virtue of its own, but is drawn upward by their divine affluence, wafted to the rafters in their updraught. Nor do the rafters impede them, for the gloom of this ineffectual godtrap has no power to imprison. Those voices could be seen, no doubt, by an observer outside, as a four-pointed twirling star right in the apex of the sky.

Each seems to have the intrinsic beauty a word might have, the word of a strange language, uninvoking, purely lovely in its strangeness. The name Pandora is herself, bright sylph. She contains mysteries. And Eleanor, as elusive as nightingales; Oriole, gold, like a maple tree.

But wrong, wrong, wrong ! There is no symbol here, but desire, and the feminine. Desire for the feminine ! I am perverting, I say, refining—lying about my desire in these words. And then the imagination takes control again, protectively. They are composed of fire and air, not of blood, and hungers, and cramp, rising up like oaken fingers from this seat to clutch my behind. They live on a paradisiacal island of unparalleled perfection, protected by the green billows of beech trees. They live in a delectable cottage on the edge of the most exuberant wood in the world. Here liana and tulip trees might

easily grow, and the floor is rich with herb robert and purple campion. This wood fades into their garden, sidling over a fence, decrepit, not from neglect, but in despair at making a barrier against so much beauty.

And as man's world decays, his stone town becoming the vacuum nature abhors, this wood increases like Her Triumph its luxuriant beauty. Each spring is more fantastically green. It is only in such places, lying disguised, that there could exist an island such as theirs able to resist the waterfall cataracting down.

Here they live, on a lotus island in the middle of the fall. I feel sometimes an urge to destroy their refuge, using subversive doctrines, arguments that to me are unanswerable and true. Sometimes I think that my presence and deformity could destroy it; for I am ugly. But they are too strong and subtle for me, and no argument is unanswerable when one desires to live. Their father preserves a spiritual integrity in spite of employment in the city, for he has made a pact with green. They are dryads, who, at the approach of war will more perfectly assume their protective colouring, and so may survive. Perhaps they will form a rural nucleus or a new world.

And why should I reproach them with cowardice for wanting to survive? They are more courageous than I, who must succumb. But no, they are not. They hide like ferrets in small holes because they are afraid of falling into a larger hole; that of death and decay. To live on a personal island of happiness in a sea of misery is delusion: but to live on a personal island of unhappiness and decay, as I do, is to be on no island at all, but part of the sea.

And so I walk in their woods, an alien. A hunch-backed shadow of me darkens the woods, creeps furtively over the fence as I climb the stile into their garden. Desire follows the shadow, seeing the flesh grow dull and lascivious under my touch. I forget my flesh and ugliness. Love? As often as I have imagined my distorted form finding a new beauty in death, so I imagine their superb flesh by death unknit, the muscles falling from the bones, the eyes staring, the belly congealed,

like a fish. Flaccidly the petals of the individual wilt, leaving a corruption in vermillion and ebony. These become a new beauty more startling than my lack of beauty.

My desire makes decay romantic, and though I know these sentiments are false, though I know that corruption of leaves under hawthorns is soft and lovely, decay is horrible, and my desire still uncurbed.

They are kind to me, not mentioning my affliction, not exaggeratedly charitable. Outwardly, I must seem calm and happy in their house. This room is furnished with such a mixture of beautiful, personal, and sentimental objects that the whole is fused to an atmosphere individual and intimate. A large witch-ball hangs from a rafter in the centre of the room. On one side of the fireplace hangs a reproduction of Leonardo's "Madonna of the Rocks," and on the other, Margaret Tarrant's "All Things Bright and Beautiful." The armchairs are so shapeless they seem like mounds on the floor, or sylvan fungi, grown there. They are supremely comfortable. In fact a wonderful air of comfort hangs over the place, a sweet smoke of the luxuriant wood. Yet there is always an enemy to comfort in my desire, which seems to scent another desire hidden in the air, like the tang of smoke.

The three sisters are variants upon the theme, an elusive and subtle genius of time and place. Pandora is darkest and strangest, her quality laughter or a yew tree. She opens her box, and it is laughter that frighteningly bursts out. Yet hope remains for me. She is a jester whose laughter rebels against an inexplicable spiritual suffering, so completely disseminated by laughter that it is not remedied. Each time the cistern of pain is filled it is emptied by laughter. If it did not so overflow, her being would explode in madness. But it is her sadness I would know and share. Perhaps out of that, and out of mine, love might blossom.

But as I walk though their valleys and hills, traverse the lanes, penetrate their woods, it is the atmosphere of the three that infuses all. Eleanor passes on a white horse. She becomes suddenly the embodiment of all those romances I as a child lived. She is Cinderella, the

Sleeping Beauty, and in particular the Beauty of which I am Beast. Eleanor passes, disguised as a schoolgirl, on a bicycle. I notice for the first time her youth, her vulnerability, her poise. As she approaches I have an impulse to turn aside, suddenly conscious of the caverns in which I habitually dwell. But I turn again and meet her. Her dark hair is heavy down her back, giving her head an immobile and slightly ponderous erectness. Like an awakening in her face, as if it were a sculpture shimmering on the verge of completion: behind a mask of stone there is a light that burns mistily, a promise. Woman will be marvellously carved out of her adolescence.

We meet and pass, exchanging smiles, and a word, a world of greeting. And now Oriole appears, completing the division of my heart, now a three-part seed that has not yet dehisced, but remains straining, in some measure happy. She is a being of gold and azure, not bodied, in my flesh. Perhaps my own fears prevent her bodying, she is so superb and assured. Like another one, her agate perfection would jag upon my imperfections, upon my hump, and the corners of my heart. In a dream I see her like a kingfisher, diving and soaring above the heads of the other two, a dolphin or an obbligato. She is the brilliant variation of the threefold theme.

Like phantoms, like accompanying swallows at a marriage procession, these two soar away and vanish. They are still in the room, but Pandora has gained my lasting attention. As she lolls in an armchair she discloses to me the road which makes adventitious all other feminine charms. The cave of desire, at the end of the white lanes of thighs, dropping, I glimpse into a forest. In that cave the air is balmy and scented, and all pain vanishes. My mind, that was led waywardly after the fantastic and the strange, now becomes rooted in the normal and the ordinary. In her box alone hope lies.

I have visions of a world peopled by healthy men and women, and healthy babies. I see a vision of my unhealth drained and made innocuous in her healthy body, my germ of crookedness straightened in sons. She has become the tranquil original melody of the theme, about which the others are no more than surprising variations.

Her face is soft and mobile, reflecting perfectly her thoughts. A kiss would now be the fusion of an inner being, and not the scintillation of two white firm surfaces, like sculpture in contact. The quandaries of her growth hang behind her eyes, for a moment balanced and tranquil, as she were a Botticelli woman. Her hair is a dark frame of pine trees framing the dryad face, once piquant, now smooth and womanly.

The lovely alien has now completely vanished. Though I am not looking at her my eye holds her in its corner, and my whole body knows of her approach. One moment ago she was antagonistic to me. Now she is not. Sometimes her eyes are cloudy, and sometimes clear. The clouds show her antagonism. Sometimes with my gaze I can disperse them.

Her concern is for the cat on my shoulder. She kisses it, murmuring endearments. Do I intrude upon her solitude to appropriate those caresses to myself? And I have no qualms, for undoubtedly I intrude upon her island of fertility and goodness. The world of healthy babes unthreatened by war does not exist. The rural green time has forever gone, and this house is a survival or an illusion.

We walked in the cathedrals of the beeches, the pillars carved more intricately and beautifully than the stone ones made to oppress by their immensity. Here you breathed the sweet scent of the thyme, the sharp scent of beeches; when you exhaled, your breath filled immensity, filtering through the green and gold interstices of the trees. This was not the immensity of oppression, but the immensity of freedom; freely wandering over the downs, under arches, the architraves, the naves of the trees.

Whilst at school this freedom lasted a few hours only, each Sunday afternoon. After we left, we had long days with no apparent restrictions, or rather we forgot about restrictions. My parents had come to live in the district, so that there was not the agonised and sentimental parting that terminated most schoolboy and schoolgirl romance. We were both looking for jobs, both spending impatient and backaching hours scanning the wanted columns of the *Daily Advertiser*, wrote about six letters

a day, diffidently and unconfidently attended interviews. We had both grown up in schools more suitable for people who would be allowed a life of leisure.

Forgetting these worries for a moment we used to take sandwiches, and spend the day in the open. We wandered, buoyed on the soft earth, lifted on the soft airs of a summer that seemed never to end. The green jewels sparkled all around us, and we expanded to the size of the blue bowl of the sky. Or we came out onto the ledge of a hill smooth as a lord's lawn, looking out over three counties, the sea glimpsed or imagined between the Downs.

Often we would make the air murky with our talk: air coloured by the country and the sun; clouded by desire, by despair, by hysteria; coloured by the luxuriant summer growth; clouded by want, futility, by apparent purposelessness.

Though we both knew the desire of our bodies neither of us spoke of it. We both knew despair and spoke continually of it, grumbling at a world that seemed to have no use for us. More often grumbling at ourselves, for we had been taught that success depended entirely on personal initiative. No future opened; we never spoke of it. Climbing over a fence I caught hold of her, and we kissed silently.

I could not claim her.

She was sixteen, and belonged to nobody. But that spring and summer the world blossomed in both of us.

And in the summer the orchids came; the bees with mauve wings and lovely mosaics, perched on stalks, and yet did not stir when you picked them. Pyramids of yellow men hung, parachute-like, in whorls from a stem. The sweet-scented butterfly, Helleborine, and once, marvellously fashioned, growing on an almost perpendicular chalk crag, the rare lizard.

Hand in hand through the patterns of the trees, the beech cathedrals, the wide valleys. When I kissed her she responded, but we were silent walking home.

She wasn't to be seen after that. After church she chatted gaily with a circle of acquaintances. My heart

shrunk up small at the idea of calling at her house any more. Then I got a job in London.

The world's cold beauty rushes up this January morning, and I'm glad I came. The scene looks remote and cold, in the sunshine. The trees wave their arms aimlessly. This I cannot grasp, it means nothing to me. Too long in the town, we never watched the seasons for our livelihood, or saw the earth as our sustenance.

RHYTHM WITHOUT MUSIC

Jenny Gertz

"Look what I can do!" "Watch me!" From all sides I am called and asked to watch what a very busy group of two- and three-year-olds can perform with their body. They can hardly speak yet, but they can lift a leg up high towards the ceiling or try to kick their head from behind. The classical ballet has a name for that kick, but we call it Hallo Head. These children can run fast, shaking their small hands, or drop slowly down till they end wildly hitting on the floor. One boy of two loves to do pirouettes with one leg held high: he manages a single pirouette, falls down, scrambles quickly up, and tries another twirl, till a different type of movement catches his attention. Another child loves jumping. A third loves to stretch slowly out, further and further. A fourth is expert in slow arm movements; a fifth in making "long legs."

Children are keen on experimenting and creating. Up to the age of eight the body is their primary means of expression. Because of this concentration by the child on bodily movement the Children's Theatre in Moscow rightly asks its actors to be first of all dancers. At these early years the child's vocabulary is still limited, and everything he does is underlined by movement. This preoccupation with movement is in part used by teachers who encourage their children to be animals or to act out mimes which are often accompanied by words or

music. But apart from such applications there is deep in the child an innate desire for movement, a great delighting in movement for its own sake, without any concern for the meaning or idea behind it. This is the kind of movement-impulse in which I am interested, which I try to develop, and which leads into dance.

Go back to your childhood and recall the game called "Making Statues." In every country children play it. "Twist into statues" is my first command with children over five years of age. Statues can be made in every possible position: lying down, sitting, kneeling, standing. They can be spread out or contracted, stretched on tip-toe, or crouched down, and we can combine several statues by jumping, by quick or slow steps, by slashing, striking, pushing, or punching.

We can make them reveal all kinds of tensions—those of great strength or extreme weakness. The child's joy of experimenting, its healthy urge to overcome difficulties, drives each child forward to invent new and better forms. Once they are deeply interested in this kind of movement, there is no halt. They try them out wherever they are, at home, in the street, on tables, chairs, window-sills, and staircases. They all have arms, legs, shoulders, elbows—in short, a body!

They can stretch and bend out in the open or closely pressed against wall or floor, or aspiring to ceiling or sky. The statue is for the child a basic form. Using all the possibilities I have mentioned, moving from one statue into another, the child comes to realise body and space first in a kind of self-invented exercise, then in a little tentative dance-phrase until at the end, they really dance.

And all this is done without music. It may seem to some people incredible that dancing is possible without music. I am not opposed to music for dancing, but my children taught me to wait till the right moment comes. My aim is not merely to teach controlled movements to musical time, but is to free the creative powers dormant in the child. In my opinion, it is asking too much of a child to expect it at one and the same time to listen to music, to discover its body and space, and to find its own rhythm.

For the same reason, I avoided giving them any story as a stimulant which would lead them to act instead of dance. Children who have been made conscious of their body and its possibilities in movement and space, and in whom the joy of movement in varying rhythms is awakened, are so full of ideas, so full of their own inner compulsion that they even object to music. They have no time, no patience for anything that comes from outside. The joy of playing makes the child aware of all the many possibilities of its body in relation to space and rhythm.

Have you ever observed a group of small children, how absorbed they are in a slow movement? How their little bodies seem to sing and the whole room seems to be involved in that spirit of devotion?

Rich as they are in rhythm and ideas without music, if music is introduced too early, their imagination stops at once and their way of moving becomes monotonous and boring. Generally they themselves do not like it. If, however, music is introduced at the right stage of their development, the child accepts it happily and is stimulated by it. The teacher's task is therefore to time this moment of introduction correctly, but then this question of timing is fundamental in everything the teacher does with the child.

Only very gifted children, for instance, show at a very early stage, fluency of movement and a capacity for longer dance-phrases. As far as I have been able to observe, the average child begins to enjoy fluent movement at about $4\frac{1}{2}$ years of age. From six years onwards in children who are taught in this way, one can observe the beginnings of special foot rhythms which develop more and more after eight years.

In my classes the children copy each other and are thus more stimulated than when the teacher shows them an exercise unfitted for their little bodies, wrong in expression and much more limited than their own inventions. The child's imagination, experience, and body are quite different from a grown-up's. The child has time! More respect for the abilities of a child, more patience, and law of all laws: Never show a child what a child can do by itself.

PROLOGUE TO THE SHOEMAKER'S WIFE

Federico Garcia Lorca

(The author walks briskly on in front of the curtain. He is dressed in a dinner-jacket suit and carries a paper in his hand.)

AUTHOR: My respected public. (*Pause.*)

No, not respected public, just public. That is not to say that the author does not consider the public worthy of respect; quite the contrary. But beneath that word there lies a delicate tremor of fear, a kind of plea that the audience should be generous with the playing of the actors and the skill of the production. The poet does not beg for favours, but for attention, having long since surmounted that thorny barrier of fear through which authors approach the theatre audience. Because of this absurd fear, and because so often the theatre is only a commercial venture, poetry retires from the stage in search of other surroundings, where people do not become alarmed if, for example, a tree should transform itself into a cloud of smoke, or three fishes, at a word and a wave of the hand, become three million fishes to appease the hunger of a multitude. Here the author has chosen to dramatise the lively rhythm of an ordinary little shoemaker's wife. Everywhere around us, wherever you hear the lilt of a song, there beats that poetic heart that the author has clothed with the garb of a woman of the people. The audience will not be surprised, then, if she appears a little violent at times and disturbs your peace somewhat, for she is always struggling, struggling with the reality that surrounds her and struggling with fantasy when it becomes, in fact, part of that reality.

(Behind the curtain the voice of the shoemaker's wife is heard calling.)

SHOEMAKER'S WIFE: I want to come on!

AUTHOR (*calling through the curtain to her*): Wait a minute! Don't be so impatient. You're not to wear a long evening gown and fancy plumes. Do you hear me? You're to wear the shabby dress of a shoemaker's wife.

(Again her voice is heard calling.)

SHOEMAKER'S WIFE: I want to come on!

AUTHOR: SILENCE!

(The curtain rises on a dimmed stage.)

AUTHOR: Thus the dawn comes every day to every street, and people shake off their half-world of dreams to go about their work, just as you do here in your house, my wonderful little shoemaker's wife.

(The stage begins to light up.)

AUTHOR: We start off with you coming in from the street.

(Several angry voices are heard off-stage. The author turns to the audience.)

AUTHOR: Good night.

(He takes off his opera hat, and it lights up inside with a green light, which shines through the crown. As he goes to put it on again, a stream of water squirts from it. He looks at the audience a little admonishingly, then shrugs his shoulders ironically and walks off.)

AUTHOR: I beg your pardon.

(As he walks off, the stage is fully lighted and the action commences.)

Translated by George Leeson.

A MORNING WITH PICASSO

Anatole Jakovski

IMAGINE yourself in front of an old house with a high gateway like so many others in this old quarter of Paris, a few steps from the Rue Christine, where the ghost of the poet Appolinairre still lingers. Imagine yourself climbing a steep spiral staircase to attics where doves are cooing gently. Then imagine that a door opens, unexpectedly, and you find yourself in a great, long, empty, and austere room like a throne room or reception hall of a palace. . . . Instead of that you are in two communicating studios, one larger than the other, the first devoted entirely to sculpture, and the other to paintings. It was here that

"Guernica" first saw the light of day, and here, in a few days' time, "Le Charnier" will be completed.

I must explain that my first spontaneous comparison of these rooms to a castle was not entirely without foundation. This building could easily be regarded as a castle, but a haunted one, twilit, even in broad daylight, and seemingly floating over a sea of ordinary houses. It is haunted by the spirit of poetry and the spirit of the unknown which sometimes rises above everyday experience and is distilled into an essence of true joy or pain.

Joy is visible in all the ordinary and everyday objects which welcome you from the door . . . the mottled clay pipes, coloured statues adorned with lace, embroidered pictures, feathers, earthenware, basketwork, pottery, old furniture, antique chests, old antlers, musical instruments, and some flawless crystalware. An empty chicory basket hangs on the wall, a brass serpent lies on the floor, while pictures and guitars are posed on low divans. . . . And pain? Is that also not found everywhere? And is it not reflected from everything when Picasso contemplates the world around him?

However, there is nothing of the sorcerer about the smiling, friendly master of the house, except that penetrating gaze of his which seems to lay bare not only one's body and soul, but all the hidden qualities and defects which distinguish you from other men. This explains why there is nothing in human nature unknown to Picasso. He sees it with all its ugliness and faults as it was at Buchenwald and Ravensbruck. Is it the fault of Picasso that he has chosen an ugly age in which to live?

Picasso first of all showed me a series of sketches of heads of women, drawn with a few telling and expressive lines, keeping to essentials and nothing else. It reminds one of the first drawings of the bull in the cartoon which, after a thousand different changes, takes on a magic animation.

"I seek nothing," Picasso said to me, "I am only trying to put as much of human nature as is possible into my pictures. It does not matter in the least if this attitude offends certain worshippers of the conventional

type of portrait. Besides, all that these people need to do is to look at themselves a little more carefully in the mirror. What is there in a face after all? Is it merely a photograph or a mask? What is this face when painted by different artists? Does not each of us see the face in a different way? This can hardly be called distortion. Daumier and Lautrec saw the human face differently from Ingres and Renoir, and I see it in yet another way, and I paint only what I see. I have possibly seen and felt differently at various stages in my life, but I have only painted what I saw and what I felt at that time. One's method of painting is like a writer's style, but one's whole being is put into one's work. The result might be compared with literature and is a matter for commentators and critics. It has nothing more to do with painters.

"I know nothing of plastic mediums. Symbolism counts more in paintings than the way in which a thing is painted. Nevertheless, there is a great difference between the object and the painter's method of interpretation. The word 'chair' has no particular meaning, but a painted chair has some significance and can be interpreted in an infinite number of ways, just as when slang is spoken and a range of other interpretations runs in one's imagination and replaces the strict meaning of the words used. At the door you can see a picture by a painter whose name I will not mention. He is a very poor painter, yet the very same subject treated in exactly the same manner, with the same colours, by Cezanne would have been beautiful. Some artists produce works of art, and others daubs, and this cannot be explained. Why do some colours scream at each other when put side by side? Just as no one can explain that, so no one can learn how to paint. . . . You wish to know what I think of young painters? Well, there are different types and youth has no age. There are some young artists to-day who are older and more out of date than painters who have been dead for centuries. But, of course, they all have to start by expressing themselves in the manner of their period, and not in the way which belongs to other times, or has been discovered by other artists. For example, they learn only method at the Ecole des

Beaux-Arts. It is exactly the same as learning how to make shoes, and after all, you could not wear shoes which had been made by apprentices.

"Look at these sketches, it is not that I wish to draw them in a certain style that they have turned out as they are, but it is simply that everything superficial has been eliminated. I never seek to do anything 'on purpose.' For that you must look to poetry: here also there is no need for many words, and there is often more poetry in two or three lines than in a long poem."

"If I understand you correctly, you see then no essential difference between a portrait and a fresco?"

"No, definitely not," replied Picasso, "There is only good and bad painting. Why enlarge what is beautiful in miniature, especially as a picture is assessed by its quality and not its size. Why, too, do people wish to ornament everything? So that it shall always remain exactly like the original? Wallpaper has two definite advantages over frescoes and tapestries—it costs less and it can be changed more often."

"Just one more question: do you believe that there is a rift between the painter and the public?"

"Yes," said Picasso, "for the moment at least. But it is not the fault either of the painter, or of the public. It is true that the public does not always understand modern art, but that is because they have never been taught anything about painting. They were taught to read and write, to draw and to sing, but no one ever thought to teach them how to look at a painting, or told them what poetry, life, form, and rhythm they could discover in it—in fact those plastic rhymes which we were talking about a little while before. In the same way in another field people do not know how to appreciate a poetic image or a musical phrase. In order to educate the public, I think it would be useful to print a number of cheap coloured reproductions of my works, and I hope to do some soon especially for this purpose."

Yes, all things considered, the art of Picasso can only be comprehended and appreciated by its relation to poetry. . . . But Picasso only puts on paper a type of beauty difficult to understand, not the facile type of

beauty which has become commonplace, and that is the reason for all the misunderstanding which has always accompanied his art. He takes one out of one's element, gives a profound analysis of his subject, takes it out of its setting and places it in such a way as to astound the senses.

Yet beauty is everywhere and nowhere. Man creates it according to his taste, his temperament, and his time, he makes it visible in a hitherto unknown manner. He discovers in everyday, worthless objects, least evocative of beauty, that every essence of poetry which transfigures the life of everyone . . . a piece of crumpled paper becomes a statue, bicycle handlebars and a saddle become the head of a bull, and a human head can be discovered amongst the columns and printed lines of a newspaper. A glass placed by Picasso on the table is unlike all other glasses, it is filled with a living daylight of a colour and intensity that Picasso felt and lived at the moment he painted it.

But time passes, perhaps more gently here as in childhood, when a day seems as long as a year. In his studio, the primitive feeling of pain and cruelty are found just as in childhood, and here I felt for the first time the presence and the weight of the spirit. Thank you, Picasso, for giving me the privilege of comprehending the genius which takes form under the magic strokes of your brush.

(Translated by Barbara Adams.)

LA JOLIE ROUSSE *Apollinaire*

"In the struggle between tradition and invention, between order and adventure, he was on the side of invention and adventure, and in *La Jolie Rousse*, written at the end of his life, he justified his case . . ." C. M. Bowra, Introduction to *Guillaume Apollinaire, Choix de Posies*.

HERE you see before you a man who's full of sense,
Knowing life and of death as much as the living can;
Having tasted the sorrows and ecstasies of love,
Having at times realised ideas.

Knowing several tongues,
Having travelled not a little;
Having seen in the Artillery and Infantry the War,
Been wounded in the head, trepanned under chloroform;
Having lost his best friends in the terrible conflict.
I know what of old and new is vouchsafed to one man,
And without worrying to-day about that war;
Among us and for us my friends,
I judge this long quarrel of tradition versus invention
Of Order versus Adventure.

You whose mouth is made in the image of God's
Mouth, which embodies Order itself,
Be indulgent when you compare us
To men who proved themselves order's perfection,
We who seek adventure at every hand.

We are not your judges,
We would tender to you vast and strange domains
With blossoming mysteries for any hand to cull,
For there are new fires of colours yet unseen.
Imponderable dreams
That claim realisation.

We would explore goodness, tracts where silences reign,
Time that can be pursued and brought back again;
Pity for us who fight where the frontier runs
Of the boundless the future's edges,
Pity for our errors, pity for our sins.

Now comes the Summer, the violent season,
And my youth is dead as the Spring, too, is dead.
O Sun it is the time of consuming Reason,
And I wait

Her noble form to follow it still,
The form she assumes so I alone may love it,
That comes and attracts me, as iron the magnet.

She has the air and the gait-
Of a freckled red-head.

Gold wires her hair is
The lightning-flash that tarries;
Or the flames that parade,
When tea-roses fade.

Laugh at me if you will,
Men everywhere, but especially those here;
For there are so many things I dare not tell,
So many things you would not have me tell,
Pity me.

(*Calligrammes.*)

Translated by W. J. Strachan.

INTRODUCING MICHAEL PRISHVIN

George Reavey

MICHAEL Prishvin is an unusual figure in both Russian and Soviet literature. Born in 1873, he has bridged the gap between the older Russia and the new, and is still the exponent of a genre he has alone attempted and persisted in for the last forty years. In 1946 public recognition was paid to him by the award of a Stalin Prize.

In the Land Where Birds are Not Frightened: such is the title of one of Prishvin's earliest books, published in 1906. It provides a clue to both his life and writing. He has been a traveller, agriculturist, hunter, and ethnographer. He has tramped the wilds of Siberia where the birds had not learnt to be afraid of human beings. With realistic eye he has penetrated into the mysteries of nature. Nature is his lore and only subject. From being a professional and scientific investigator of natural phenomena he has become a most sensitive observer and interpreter of the life, movements, and moods, the dynamic itself of plants, insects, and animals, which he studies in their very act of living, extracting from them their most human features. There is no element of extraneous mysticism in his interpretation of nature; there is no insistence on a Wordsworthian pantheism in his treatment of plant or animal. And yet a deep identity is established between the world of man and that of nature, but at the same time, this serves as a basis for distinction between the two.

Above all, Prishvin has achieved the art of making nature living, comprehensible, and human. As he admits himself, his interpretation of nature has evolved in the past forty years from a more biological or scientific approach to a freer and more intimate relationship. As he says, "Once I approached nature biologically and substituted a chain of causality for the free life of images. Of course, even now I do not inhibit curiosity or fail to make use of science, but now this does not at all impede the free flow of images in the process of my related attention to the life of nature." Evolving from the "naturalism" of his youth, Prishvin is now concerned above all with noting the pulse and mood of this world, and of expressing it in a living image.

This growth of vision, the result of many years' concentration on the subject, has been naturally accompanied by a development in his technique. One of the most interesting things about Prishvin is his sense of self-observation in his approach to nature: he also studies himself all the time, and discusses and verifies his method. In one of his passages, he remarks: "It should be remembered how much effort was spent by bad teachers in order to replace the direct joy of interpreting nature by scholasticism, to crowd out the living image of the sun in each flower by a quantity of stamens, petals, leaves, and stipules. We must imagine how many victims fell on the battlefield of scholasticism and living feeling, to understand my joy at my liberation from scholasticism." The method now employed by Prishvin is one of direct and detailed notation on the spot of his observations. Formerly, as he confesses, he was shy of noting his impressions of nature with too much assiduity for fear of "substituting literature for life." But this, he maintains, was due to insufficient experience. Having lost his shyness, he began to make his notes with a "business-like attention," or like an artist sketching. Thus, he says that his composition, *Spring Undressed*, was "copied" so directly that the notes he made are in no sense distinct from the final result. The method he often uses is one of complete identification with the subject to the exclusion of any consciously

lyrical reaction to it, an almost automatic process of notation, which, as he discovered, produced satisfactory results. "Ordinarily," the writer says, "I seek such a reaction (i.e., lyrical) in myself—it serves as a stimulant to writing. But sometimes it happens that one simply notes down, for example, how a squirrel crossed over on a log, without any relation to one's inner self—and the results are as good."

The problem of interpreting nature, of extracting the human essence from it, of noting fine shades of movement, have sharpened Prishvin's sensitivity to the motions of the human soul itself and the question of style. His nature has pulse and rhythm as well as psychology. "In my nature there is a constant urge to rhythm. Sometimes, getting up early, one goes out in the dew, one is overjoyed, and one decides then that one must go out like that every morning. Why every morning? Because wave follows on wave. . . ." This sense of rhythm is present in all his writings and is an essential part of the impressions he conveys. For Prishvin style springs out of an inner necessity, of "a world-embracing passion." And if the writer has this and knows it in himself, he "learns to restrain it and utter it carefully, and so your artist's style is born from your personal all-devouring necessity, and not from a simple study of the art." This restraint is, indeed, a striking feature of Prishvin's own work, which has also the qualities of balance and rhythm.

No Soviet writer is so aware of the problem of the personality or has solved it so convincingly. Prishvin's intimacy with the world of nature has made him also familiar with the human soul which he does not analyse, but of which he sometimes notes some positive aspect. He has never been a novelist or set out to depict the world of men and their social surroundings—and this makes him again a very exceptional Soviet writer—but his domain is "where poetry is born and where there is no essential difference between man and beast," where both demonstrate the existence of a unique personality. For Prishvin "Beauty is the proof of the personality. And even in the impersonal beauty of nature, if one looks into it, a creative personality is visible. Amazed by the

beauty of a landscape, some people recall the artist who created such a picture. . . . Others recognise the beauty of the landscape themselves and thus create it." Prishvin's gift is to be able to animate nature in detail, in its slightest manifestations, and to endow them with that personal creative touch which increases human awareness of the world. He has eschewed great themes, he is satisfied with the minutest detail of the life around him, but somehow, when seen by him, a minute particle of nature assumes a universal content and interest, a concreteness it did not possess before. Finally, the writer reaches a stage where he does not go out of his way to seek his subject. "Little by little, it becomes clear that it is not very necessary to chase after material: it is enough to look and write. I interpret this as a growth of confidence in myself. In scientific work there is much study and verification of one's self, but the chief thing in art is—confidence in one's self and in one's first vision. Only we must always remember that this simplicity of vision and this confidence in self are achieved through the most complex labour."

This constant intimacy with nature often leads Prishvin to intersperse his notes with philosophical generalisations which are as brief as they are to the point. Thus, in *Man's Thirst* he writes: "One is nourished on the beauty of nature as on food: you are given so much room and more you cannot. But if you succeed in expressing that, then sooner or later another man will come, and he will add his own to yours, and, after the second, a third will come, and so it will go on: man is insatiable for beauty." Or again this thought on *Victory*: "My friend, there will be no room for you either in the north or south if you are yourself defeated: to a defeated man the whole of nature is a field on which the battle was lost. But if it is victory—and every victory is a victory over yourself—even if only wild swamps were the witnesses of your victory, they also will bloom with an extraordinary beauty, and the spring will always remain for you but one spring, the glory of victory." Or this *Thought*: "To-day the frost was slight, there was no crust, and weary we returned towards eight

o'clock from the chase. When the tormented body begins to rest, then the thoughts that fill the head are all joyous. You interpret thought then as a manifestation of the body's repose. And that explains why my books are so popular in sanatoria. I must remember that at dawn in the winter, fir trees look quite black in the snow." A quality Prishvin obviously possesses, one which is reflected in his work but is in general rarely to be met with to-day, is that of love. And with it goes that perfect sense of integration with the world he has discovered. His domain is both limited and boundless. Within it he appears to be that rare thing to-day, a whole man, a personality, suffering no such self-division as afflicts a good part of mankind.

Prishvin is essentially an observer and philosopher of nature. But he also has a penetrating eye for human passions and foibles, as some of his sketches reveal. He has quite a Chekhovian insight into human nature and situations, and it is to be regretted that he did not exploit the short story more. He has on the whole preferred to remain a miniaturist, combining realistic precision with emotional restraint. His effects are poetical and lyrical, but this is a quality of the soul, the result of a happy identification, rather than of any automatic lyrical ebullience. One might describe him as a dialectician of nature, a writer who has discovered an inner law applicable to both man and nature, a sphere wherein certain antitheses have been resolved, or rather, where they are being constantly resolved. In one of his passages, *The Game*, he speaks of this process as follows: "I am not interested in any utilities, but I collect values, and through me they become useful to others. I am consoled precisely by the fact that only through me, who collects them disinterestedly, they become useful, that I, not thinking at all of profit to myself, collect them for others, and that only through my game do they become of use to people. That means there is a way of living on earth, playing." Such then is Prishvin's dialectic.

It may be asked how Prishvin fits into the scheme of socialist realism, which lays stress on the writers'

participation in the process of social construction. The external aspects of the social world are certainly absent from his work, but a certain optimistic social moral does seem to emerge from his work as a whole. He is also concrete and realistic. He is not mystical and has no theory other than that developed out of a concentration on his subject. In a sense, his interpretation of nature and his dialectical approach might serve as an example in methods and style to a great many Soviet writers who are struggling to deal with social and historical phenomena, but who often fail to achieve a balance of truth, realism, and movement; or, in other words, whose dialectical approach is less subtle than Prishvin's. On the other hand, they have to deal with more controversial issues and an historical world that is less settled and harmless than the world of nature. There Prishvin has the advantage, but they could learn a lot from him. Sometimes, Prishvin also indulges in historical awareness, but his interpretation of the thesis has a distinctly personal stamp and has less of undigested jargon about it. Thus he says: "In our time we fought against æstheticism because the interest in beauty for its own sake took away all taste for revolutionary morality. The decadents had revolted against this morality, like gods, but that was only an excess; they were at once stopped by the Revolution. Nevertheless, the personal right to serve beauty exists as a proof of the personality, and it can be demonstrated only by means of creative activity."

Such is Prishvin: a writer in his seventies, born in the reign of Alexander II and awarded Stalin Prize in 1946; a minor classic, but hardly known outside the precincts of the Soviet Union; a poet of nature, a realist, a dialectician, and a defender of the personality. His work is so much part of himself and part of nature, that it does not occur to one to dwell on his biography, and when he is shown in a caricature among other Soviet writers he is depicted walking through a forest, with a hunting rifle slung over his shoulder, and a crow gazing solemnly at him from a branch. Since 1905, when he began to write, he has published steadily and, from 1906 onwards, we find works of his appearing in all

periods, whether under the Tsars, or in the first decade of the Revolution, or in the Five-Year Plan periods of the 1930's, or again during the war, when he published *The Forest Drop*, 1943, and his children's tale, *The Storehouse of the Sun*, 1945. The Ogiz published his selected works in 1944, and these included his *Hunter's Tales*, *Calendar of Nature*, *Grandpa's Felt Boots*, *Kurymushka*, *The Black Arab*, and other of his works. His *Collected Works*, in several volumes, were already being issued before the war. It is time his creative activity received wider recognition.

PARABLES BY PRISHVIN

Translated by George Reavey

I. THE GRAIN OF WHEAT

Now even the Shakespearean power of imagination does not crush me as a writer: I know well that, if I were to succeed—without imagination, but simply by means of patient digging—in discovering in myself a grain of that by which all men live, and in telling about it, then Shakespeare himself would invite me, as a brother, to his hunting castle, and it would not even enter his head to contrast the mighty power of his genius with the grain of wheat of my belief in some friend.

II. SEPARATION AND MEETING

ADMIRING, I watched the source of a torrent. On a hillock there stood a tree—a very tall fir tree. Drops of rain gathered from the branches upon the trunk, grew larger, leapt along the winding trunk and were often doused in the thick, light-green lichens clothing the trunk. Down below the tree was bent, and the drops from under the lichens fell straight down into a quiet puddle with bubbles. In addition, different drops fell straight from the branches. and they sounded differently.

Beneath my gaze the little lake under the tree burst through, the torrent rushed under the snow towards the

road, now become a dam. The new-born torrent was so strong that it burst through the road-dam, and the water gushed down along the magpie demesne towards the river. The alder grove by the river bank was flooded, from each branch drops dripped into the creek and produced a quantity of bubbles. And moving slowly along the creek towards the torrent, all these bubbles suddenly took off there and were borne along the river together with the foam.

Through the mist some kind of birds flashed by in flight, but I could not distinguish what they were. The birds chirruped as they flew, but I could not make out their chirps for the roar of the river. They perched some distance off upon a group of trees standing by the river. I went towards them to find out who these guests were that had come to us from warmer climes.

To the roaring of the torrent and the music of ringing drops, as happens to real human music, I was in a whirl of thoughts about myself, around my sore spot, which has not healed these many years. . . . Little by little, this spinning led me to the precise thought of man's beginning: that he is not yet a man when, giving himself up to the urge for happiness, he lives together with these torrents, bubbles, and birds. Man begins at the moment when he separates himself from all this: that is the first stage of consciousness. Thus, step by step, forgetting everything, I began to ascend, through my pain, to the abstract man.

I came to on hearing a chaffinch sing. I could not believe my ears, but I soon understood that those birds flying through the mist, those early visitors, were all chaffinches. Thousands of chaffinches flew by, singing and perching on the trees, and in their numbers scattering in the chill, and for the first time the words chaffinch and chill became associated for me. But, above all, on meeting these welcome birds there was fear that, had there been fewer of them, then it is very possible I should have missed them altogether, thinking about myself.

So then, I pondered, to-day I shall miss the chaffinches, but to-morrow I shall pass by a good living man, and he

will perish without my attention. I understood then, that in that abstraction of mine there was the commencement of some big and fundamental delusion.

III. PARACHUTE

IN such silence, when without crickets in the grass there were crickets singing in one's own ears, a little yellow leaf fell slowly down from a birch tree, shaded by tall fir trees. It fell down in such silence that even the aspen leaf was still. It seemed the motion of the leaf had attracted the attention of all, and all the fir trees, birches, and pines with all their little leaves, twigs, cones, and even the bushes, even the grass under the bushes, were wondering and asking: "How could the little leaf stir and move in such silence?" And complying with the universal request to find out—whether the little leaf had stirred of its own, I went up to it and discovered. No, the little leaf had not moved of its own: it was a spider, wishing to come down, that had weighed too heavily on it and made of it a parachute: a smallish spider had floated down on this little leaf.

IV. THE IMAGES OF OUR LOSSES

OF art, I think that it always gives us the images of our personal losses—how else? Infallibly I must love something, separate, interrupt the nuptial flight and assuage the pain with the images of the lost. Thus all poets begin to sing of nature because they have lost the natural riches common to all. We men, advancing millions of years, have lost our ability to swim, fly, or perch, like leaves upon suckers, fixed to a mighty tree-trunk, or crawl upon slender stalks of plants, swaying in the wind, spinning like pollen in the air, filling the air with spores—once we were everything and have lost much that was so good, that we should much like to have it again. And only because we are related to the whole world, do we re-establish the common ties through force of related attention and rediscover our personality in men of another mode of life, even in animals, even in plants, even in stones.

V. ANOTHER ENEMY

I WENT to the baths.¹ It seemed to me that P. had also come in and sat down beside me. I avoided looking at him for fear he would start swearing at me. I made off and he followed me. I sat down by the tap. He also sat down there. For a long while we washed side by side. It was embarrassing I got up and slipped away quietly into another room.

"Well, I've got rid of him," I thought to myself, "the enemy will not follow me."

Far from it: the enemy stalked me with pail, bast-wisp, and soap. And again he sat down beside me. "Well," I thought, "he's certain to beat me up now." In case of anything, I moved the pail near my right hand, gripping it firmly to have it ready in time and made up my mind: I raised my eyes to the enemy and was dumbfounded. . . . The enemy turned out not to be P., and far from being an enemy, he asked me to scrub his back for him.

How often there must be cases of fear arising and of enmity towards a man only because one is loath to raise one's eyes and look him in the face.

How often has that happened to me: one was about to hit the enemy with a pail, but instead one soaped a bast-wisp and scrubbed his back with it.

VI. THE MOUSE

DURING a flood a mouse swam about for a long time in the water in search of firm ground. Exhausted, it saw at length a bush sticking from the water and scrambled on top of it. Until now the mouse had lived like all mice, it had watched and did as they did, and lived. But now it had to think for itself how to live. And at sunset a red sunbeam so strangely lit up the mouse's little forehead, like a human forehead, and those ordinary black mouse bead-eyes flared up in a red fire, and kindled in them the significance of a mouse abandoned by all, that particular mouse which had come but once into the world and would depart forever from it if it did not find a

¹ These are, of course, the traditional Russian steam baths.

means of salvation; and countless generations of new mice would never generate a mouse exactly like it.

The same thing happened to me in my youth as with that mouse: not water, but love, an element also, overwhelmed me. I lost then my Fazelia, but in my sorrow I grasped something, and when the elements of love were asleep, I came towards men, as towards a safe shore, with my word about love.

VII. PRISONED TREES

WITH its upper tuft, as with the palm of a hand, the tree was scooping up the falling snow, and as a result a mound of such proportions grew that the top of the birch began to bend. And it came about that in the thaw snow fell again and stuck to that mound, and the upper branch with the mound bent the whole tree in an arch, until finally the top with the huge mound sank into the snow on the ground and was fixed like that till the spring came. All winter beneath this arch beasts passed and sometimes men on skis. Standing beside, proud fir trees looked down upon the stooped birch, as men born to rule might look down upon their subjects.

In the spring the birch came back to the fir trees; and if it had not stooped that very snowy winter, then it would have remained among the fir trees both winter and summer; but, having bent once, it went on bowing now, at the slightest fall of snow, and eventually and unfailingly it bent in an arch every year over the path.

It is fearsome to enter a young wood in the winter —quite impossible to enter it. Where one walked in the summer along a wide path, now across this path lie bent trees, and they lie so low down that only a hare can run under them. But I know a simple magic means of walking along such a path without stooping. I break off for myself a good heavy stick, and I only have to strike a bent tree with that stick and the snow tumbles off with all its figures, and the tree leaps up and makes way. So I walk slowly on and with magic blows liberate a great many trees.

THE GOAT, THE CROSS, AND THE CABARET

Laurie Lee

THEY called for me early at my breakfast under the mimosa: Achmed, grinning and posturing; Fergusson, a huge brown Scotsman from the department of agriculture; and an interpreter with the valiant name of Herakles.

We set off immediately, for we had far to go. Once more we drove west through the plain between the two blue heaps of mountains. In the clear sparkling air the snow on Troödos seemed to burn with the light of a magnesium flare.

“Lovely morning,” I said.

“It’s always a lovely morning,” said Fergusson, looking round him with hatred. Achmed swung the car into a ditch after a dog.

“If anything catches your eye, sing out,” said Fergusson. He gave the impression that nothing could catch his any more, but he was prepared to humour me. I had been watching the peasants in the fields as we drove along; men in blue shirts, black sagging trousers—the Greek vrakas—and high leather boots. I had been wondering idly if these boots, being home-made, were interchangeable, right with left. Eventually I said so.

“Stop!” said Fergusson, and Achmed braked hard. By now we were on a hill road, miles from anywhere. Deep in the valley a man saw us and began scrambling and climbing up the rocks towards us. We waited long in silence, watching him. At last he reached the road, his face shining with sweat, and saluted us.

“Do your boots fit both feet?” asked Fergusson, in Greek.

“Yes,” said the man.

Fergusson turned to Achmed, and waved his hand.

“Drive on!” he said. And we drove on.

Rising now through valleys of olives and wheat fields, I saw women washing grain by the side of the road and spreading it out on straw mats to dry in the sun. Girls,

working in the fields, revealed themselves in the simple primary colours of their clothes, blue, green, yellow, and red, standing like pale wild flowers among the wheat. Their linen dresses, straight, close-fitting, and reaching to the knees, were cut to an austere and traditional pattern, stitched up from the cloth they had spun, woven, and dyed in their own homes.

Fergusson, in his lazy, off-hand, good-natured fashion, described the rudiments of the peasant agriculture as we drove along. There were three types of land: private, state-forest, and village commune. The Church was the largest single landowner. Crop rotations of the village lands were of the simplest—cereals one year, fallow the next. Cultivation by casual partnership was common; one man providing the seed, another the labour, a third the land, all sharing. But ploughing, sowing, harvesting, and threshing was often a co-operative labour within the village.

He told me about the Ottoman Land Code, which produced a fantastic system of hereditary succession, dividing a farmer's land among his sons, and at their death among *their* sons, until possessions reached such a crazy limit of dispersal that thirty or forty people would hold shares in one vineyard, and olive groves would be divided up until not only were single trees separately owned, but even their several branches.

By mid-morning we reached the village of Lythrodondta, a village folded in a valley on the foothills of Troödos. We sat under a plane-tree, drinking thick coffee, and here they told me about the goat.

The goat is the cow of Cyprus, a valuable animal in that grassless land, both for flesh and milk. When tethered and fed with fodder, or grazed under strict control, he causes no trouble. But "free-ranging" he becomes a scourge, and in Cyprus had been so for many generations. Long years of heavy grazing by irresponsible goatherds had helped to lay bare huge tracts of land; the poisoned teeth of their flocks attacked both crops and trees alike. Foraging on bushes, they killed them; they withered the branch of the olive with a bite; in the forests they grazed on the seedlings of pines and cedars so that the trees grew dwarfed, twisted, and mutilated.

The goatherd, springing from a long tradition of happy-go-lucky anarchy was the enemy both of society and fertility; to him anything that grew was fair food for his flock, and the settled farmer was his natural victim. See him sprawled in the shade of a tree, with his food bag, wine-skin, and fleece coat, and you saw a wild man who was often a bully, intimidating the farmer with threats and acts of violence. And his goats, leaping to crop the olives, or chewing and staring with their pale, cold, pagan eyes, were obstinate and destructive like him.

The goat, then, was both a social and an agricultural problem, and I was to hear more of him before I left Cyprus. But in this village of Lythrodondta they had tackled the problem by outlawing the free ranging of goats altogether from the village area. This had been done by a vote of farmers; tethered goats only were allowed, the crops were safe, the young trees flourished, and the valley was green.

This greenness was also due to the tackling of another problem, the starvation of water. Water was the obsession of the farmer; there was either too much or too little. The savage rains of winter came down in torrents from the hills, carving the fields into gulleys and washing the soil away. In the long dry months of summer the streams dried to a trickle, or failed altogether. Then it was that water became the source of jealousy and violence. Some farmers had wells, but they were not always lucky. Their wells dried too, or they would be forced to sit out at night with drawn knives to guard them from the desperate thieving of other villagers.

In 1944 the villagers of Lythrodondta had thrown a dam across their steep river valley. This had gathered the low trickling stream into a lake, piling it up to the level of fields that had never had water. A high irrigation channel ran out from the lake and wound through the village fields; it was patrolled continually by guards, and from it each farmer was allowed so many minutes of water daily.

The dam was planned and partly financed by the Government, and I was shown it with pride. I walked

over the lip of it, and saw the dim blue forms of olive trees swaying under the water. A man came with a bucket of small live fish and released them among the dancing mosquitoes. This was an anti-malarial measure. The water shone wide and strange under the dry rocks, the largest stretch of fresh water in the island.

Well, here were two subjects, the goat and the water, and I noted them down for the film I was making. But I had further to go yet. We left the dominoes and coffee-cups under the plane tree, and drove off. As we passed from the village area the trees and bushes suddenly disappeared, we were back in the regions of the goat; the soil dry, crumbling, lime-coloured, deathly.

We arrived for lunch at a small monastery at the foot of a steep and isolated mountain, Stavrovouni, the Mountain of the Cross. Perched on the peak above us, and shining golden like a weathercock in the sun, stood the main monastery, one of the oldest in Cyprus.

The buildings at the foot were an outpost, and here we planned to eat. There was a white courtyard with fig trees, and a well, dripping cool. Yellow grain lay drying on strips of sacking, and the air hummed with honey bees. As I walked into the yard my eyes were suddenly dazzled by the sight of numerous peacock-coloured paintings propped up in the sun against a brilliant white wall. They were the works of one of the monks, works of savage and almost sinister devotion. There were madonnas, saints, and ikons, with great eyes and vivid robes; some pictured the life of Christ, and others told raw and violent parables. There was one of a soul ascending—the body a fat white cocoon, like a silkworm, with a desperate head sticking out of it. Another showed God and the Devil fighting for a sinner; the Devil was naked and purple, with a red forked tongue and tail; the sinner, prostrate before the Almighty, was confessing his sins by vomiting smoking snakes out of his mouth. And the Devil, with a label of talk round his head, was saying in Greek, “Don’t tell him everything. Keep back some of the good ones ! ”

The courtyard seemed deserted. Herakles, hungry, went shouting for the monks, and at last one of them

appeared, with keys to unlock the kitchen. He was a stooping old man, with a thick horsehair beard, a round black cap, and a tattered habit shining with age and grease. He saluted us without a word, but with a little bow and a smile of his black teeth. Then, rolling up his sleeves, he fetched viands and a small goatskin bellows, and in half a minute the charcoal embers were glowing bright. Herakles stood over the monk and nagged him at his preparations, while Fergusson and I sat waiting in the blue light of a bare whitewashed room nearby.

In its own good time the meal arrived, and was prodigious. We had each two eggs, fried goat's cheese, potatoes and radishes, dried fruit and jellied sweets, honey, olives, coffee, and wine. The wine was a potent distillation of the brothers' own; the honey they gathered from their own bees; everything on the table, in fact, was of their cultivation.

While we ate, and Herakles grew loud with the wine, calling like an emperor for more honey, a younger monk entered the room, dust covered, from a journey. Silently he went into a corner and sat alone, eating chives, onions, and black bread. His face was bright red, his hair a dark tangled mane hanging down his shoulders, and he tore at the bunched chives with his yellow teeth like a horse cropping grass.

"They never wash or cut their hair," said Fergusson, loudly. "Part of their religion."

The young brother said nothing at all, but sat chewing and licking his fingers, staring mournfully in front of him with his huge dark vacant eyes.

We finished our meal and rose to go.

"Nothing to pay," said Fergusson, stretching his great limbs. He gave a deep laugh at the folly of all monks. "But you can make a donation if you like." And he threw a few coins into a collection box.

Now we got into the car and climbed in a spiral round and round the mountain to the top of it. This holy eminence soars like a cone out of the lower hills, and the old white monastery clings to its topmost peak, glittering, for all to behold. Nothing could have been lifted more

bodily into the sky. The view from its wall was magnificent and dizzying. The yellow hide of the Mesoaria, flushed with ripe wheat and hazy with heat and distance, stretched itself out for a hundred miles. And far away lay the pale blue edge of sea, mixed and lost in the sky's dim storm of dust.

Within the monastery it was dark and cool. A monk brought a candle; the dark faces of ikons smouldered in the shadows; stars, haloes, and sunbursts of brass, sprang glittering to life. The monk spoke with simple reverence, proud, yet uncertain of his treasures, watching me with his head on one side, baring his teeth with pleasure at every word of praise.

The church was founded by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, in A.D. 324. In that year she journeyed from Palestine, bearing holy relics which included, not only the True Cross, but the crosses of the two thieves also. She was charged in a dream to build a church for these relics, and this she did, on the peak of this mountain, Stavrovouni. And for centuries it remained the mecca of pilgrimage, the True Cross floating mysteriously in mid-air within the building. Later, the place was sacked, and much of the holy wood stolen or destroyed.

"But we still have one piece remaining," said the monk, and he led me to a large crucifix, wrought in silver. A silver grille lay over Christ's loins, and behind the grille was the wood.

That afternoon we went to Lefkera, a large stone village famous for its lace. It was an hour's journey, through wild country, and the air was hot and sweet with spring. We drove up a long twisting valley, between steep rough banks that sailed past us like a pageant, purple with lavender, starred with white rock roses, croaking with frogs, darting with lizards, and buzzing with scattered partridges. And we arrived at last in a village of limestone houses as solid and square as a village in the Cotswolds.

In courtyards of cool green the girls sat working at their lace, singing in rough hard voices, or murmuring gossip. All the girls in the village worked at the lace,

stooping their dark heads low over the sheeted linen, flashing their needles, snipping and drawing out the threads, embroidering flowers and arabesques on tablecloths, cushion covers, blouses, cuffs, collars, bedspreads, curtains—labouring as much as twelve hours a day, and every day. We sat in a courtyard with a group of them and talked while they worked. An old woman brought us sweet wine and candied peel. And the girls stitched and chattered, and shook their black curls, and laughed and looked at us out of the corners of their eyes, as if enchanted in that stooping posture and unable ever to raise their heads again.

It was fine work they were doing. A tablecloth would take a girl a month of full days in the making. Then it would sell for £2 or £3. The village soon knew we were there, and a dealer arrived, showering us with cards and pleading with us to go to his house. It was a fine house, with a garden and a large fountain. Wine and sweets were served by a hunchbacked girl while the dealer produced trunks full of finished lace.

Herakles whispered that the man was a rogue. That he takes everything from the girls for a few shillings, and sells it at fabulous prices. In peacetime his sons pack bags and go off for years, peddling the stuff through Europe and America. He asked us £60 for one bedspread, £100 for another. When we left, Herakles was flushed and bitter.

“That man!” he snarled. “With his house and his garden and his fountain and his great fat belly! It is all built on the eyes and youth of the girls of this village!”

We had a puncture and a vast crowd turned out to change the wheel; men shouting and rolling in the dust under the car, boys having their ears boxed, others being sent hot-foot for tools and jacks. While this was going on a cobbler mended my shoes for nothing. Then down a long, twisting, bumping road, among tall yellow flowers, more partridges and lavender, and tiny fields of bright green barley. We came into a maze of valleys, and it grew dusk.

Suddenly, out of the dusk, a pillar of fire rose before us, then another and another. We drove into a village whose

white walls were flushed with flame, sparks streamed from the roofs into a sky of stars, smoke rolled thickly over the fields. Dogs howled, children wailed, and the fierce smell of burning filled the air. It was a strange arrival, like coming to a village that had just been put to the sword.

"This is Cornos," said Fergusson. "For some reason or other they all fire pottery here. Don't know why, but every village feels it has to specialise in something. In Lefkera it's lace, as you saw. Other villages grow almonds—nothing else." He laughed. "Others make boots or wineskins. Others distil uzo. Others just steal goats. Sheer habit."

In a cottage yard a man fed bundles of brushwood into a blazing oven. A woman with a child strapped to her back beat out clay with a heavy stick. Another woman stood by, suckling a babe to a shrivelled breast made crimson by the light of the furnace. Little girls came in a cluster and stared at us, their soft faces lit up like still terra-cotta images. All the children were girls.

"You have many girl children," I said.

An old woman gave a rough cackle.

"We like them," she said. "They work better."

Back in Nicosia Fergusson asked me to his house, a crumbling new bungalow in the suburbs. As I entered I heard a thin falsetto voice quavering arias from a Bach Passion. At the dining-room table sat a frail young Englishman, elegant in a flowered dressing gown, picking fastidiously at a meal, clapping long pale hands for the servant, and breaking into reedy song between mouthfuls. He greeted me with picturesque and rhetorical courtesy. He was something high up in the Administration, I never gathered what, though he was often referred to as "Number Five."

We all went to a cabaret in the town; it was dim, smoky, and the air dry with gritty odours of powder and cheap scent. A dance band played hoarsely, while soldiers and airmen, and a few uncertain Waafs, sat stranded at tables drinking warm expensive beer. The cabaret show was macabre with false glitter—a procession of blonde, decayed middle-European dancers,

in tattered silks, prancing heavily on the dusty boards, stumbling, straining, staggering, and baring cracked gold teeth in ghastly coquetry at the immobility of the clients.

This cabaret life, the haunt of old merchants and the richer of the young Cypriots, is typical of the large towns of Cyprus. The girls are seldom Greek, usually German, Austrian, Hungarian, or Russian. In normal times they spend their lives circulating among the shore towns of the Mediterranean, where their blonde looks fetch a passing price among the darker blood of the Latins. But these had been trapped in Cyprus since 1939, and six years had destroyed them. Their gaiety was desperate, their charms too well known, their tricks, like funny stories told too often. The clients were bored with them.

We went to another cabaret, one grade down. A band played, we drank wine, and girls with vivid mouths watched us hungrily from a pen.

We ended up at the lowest we could find, in the Turkish quarter of the city. The room was underground, stinking of sweat, wine, raw meat, and lavatories. An old woman, with an ashen face and with paper flowers in her white hair, thumped a cracked piano. Drooping around the walls were Cypriot youths and old weather-beaten peasants, some sleeping, others vacantly chewing, all sodden and lifeless. The girls here were quite a different thing. They were Greek and Turkish, quite young, with hard bright faces painted like boiled sweets. They didn't pretend to dance. Some sat bunched together at a table, drinking, whispering, their eyes darting restlessly round the room. Others stumbled among the sleeping figures, leaning over them, stroking their bodies, biting their ears, trying desperately to breathe some life into them.

At 10-30 a waiter came and asked us to finish our drinks.

"Bring us some more," said Number Five, languidly.

The waiter was worried, apologised, said he couldn't. "No drinking allowed after 10-30," he said. "It's the law."

"How right you are, my good fellow," said Number Five. He turned to me with a pale smile.

"I'm afraid we must go," he said. "You see, I made the law."

HOMAGE TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Mulk Raj Anand

If a generalisation be permitted, the intellectual history of India during the last hundred and fifty years may be regarded as the history of a prolonged frustration. The impact of western machine civilisation broke up the flaccid, parochial life of our old, self-enclosed villages, rail and road connected the mud huts to the brick-built towns, and the towns to the enormous metropolises of the world; and there began the excitement of a time of rapid change, the strivings of a transitional age.

But, because the transformation was initiated by alien authority without much thought of clearing the debris or of repairing some of the dilapidated ruins which had not been erased in the process, the world that emerged was a hotch-potch of several surviving cultures persisting side by side with the new "civilisation," without the emergence of a distinctive pattern. The will of the people to relate their traditional modes to the new situation was thwarted from the start. Indian society thus fell into the welter of a mental confusion in which the outworn customs of the darkest feudal past rubbed shoulders with the most modern impulses.

The fact that, both at home and abroad, English isolationism began to dam the flood gates, which had opened, made the confusion worse confounded. For instance, Lord Macaulay's attempt to make Indians talk English was on a par with Alexander III's forcible imposition of Russian on his Polish, Finnish, and German subjects. And the new education scheme which Bentinck sanctioned in 1835, was deliberately calculated to bring into contempt the ancient culture of India and to introduce a counterfeit of the English system in order to provide clerks for the various Government Departments. To add to all the other inhibitions came the vigilant guard on "dangerous thoughts."

Under the circumstances the continuous mental effort necessary to diagnose the ills of society, which is the

harbinger of a creative age, became difficult; while experiments in replacement and renewal were doomed to take place in the vicious circle of a society which frowned upon all radical talk.

I do not mean to suggest that there is any exact correspondence between the outer social life of an epoch and the art of that epoch, otherwise how could the great writers in our languages have produced their work in the modern era at all. The dialectic of art is subtler. The inventive artist is, for instance, much more concerned with living processes than with the product at the beginnings and ends of these processes. And social activity, concerning itself as it does with the outer forms of life, does not necessarily approximate, in time, to the personal and psychological curves of an age. But, in so far as social action ultimately seeks to recreate the institutions which it attacks, its inter-connection with cultural change may be taken for granted.

I

The first great contribution of Rabindranath Tagore to our renaissance was to insist on the fact of this renaissance itself, to make us conscious that we are involved in the process of rebirth as a whole people. I mean by this that, at a very early stage in his literary career, he began to concentrate on those essentially human emotions and ideas which are at the base of all external institutions which continually well up in the hearts and minds of people, and have to be renewed in times of stress, so that when analysed they can supply the basis of the actual life of a changing community, which forms the source of the values by which society lives, the poetic or philosophic content, or the principles of life of a new civilisation.

The scion of a noble family, growing up in the tradition of the Bengali revival of the nineteenth century, Tagore was favourably placed both to receive the poetic and literary influence of the classical tradition and western learning. But it is the pertinacity of instinct with which he soaked himself in the folk-culture of Bengal and, while imbibing the genuine impulses of the West, to

escape from the grooves of imitative English forms, which were current among the intelligentsia of his time that he is of value for us.

Apart from his juvenilia, and the early poems written under the influence of his Sanskrit studies, every one has heard of the effect on his sensibility of the *Vaishava* lyrics. But few have realised how intimate was his debt to the folk songs of those animistic and totemistic peoples who lived in the self-enclosed congeries of hamlets cut off from all contact from the town life. Among those communities the age-old culture of the country had filtered down and been thoroughly absorbed, and it had developed into an indigenous culture, vital enough to resist all attacks from outside and to tinge strongly anyone who came into contact with it. Rabindranath has often recorded the joy with which he entered into the wonderland of this heritage of folk tales and lyrics, and how he drank himself to ecstasy on these simple songs of the villages—poems addressed to the powers of nature, the air, the water, the trees, the rivers, and the hills, richly sensuous as they are deep, humorous as they are tragic. And it was not only from folk song, or from folk legend and story, but from the popular versions of Buddhism and Hinduism current in teeming Bengal that Tagore evolved a Pantheon to symbolise his own mental struggles.

The wedding of folk culture with the technique he had learnt from the West is a remarkable transformation. He took his poetry to the earth. He gave back the songs he took from the people as highly finished lyrics to the people, so that they are now sung in the humblest cottages and so that they have made the local dialect of Bengal into one of the great modern languages of the world. Unique enough in translation, the difficulties of transposing the sentiments of one poetry with another have prevented the range of his experimentations and of his innovations, as well as the spirit which informs his work, from being reflected in the foreign versions of his books. But if any single writer taught his countrymen how to know nature, it was Rabindranath Tagore. For he inspired the people with the belief that man can

conquer nature, possess it, and reap the rich fruits that it can yield. Always, he was "where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones," as he says in the *Gitanjali*. And, already before the turn of the century, on the strength of that alliance between his genius and the genius of the men of the soil through which he mustered the renaissance in our country, he had become to our land what Pushkin had been to Russia, Whitman to America, and Wordsworth and Coleridge to England.

I have deliberately emphasised the fact that Tagore went to the people for inspiration, because the intelligentsia of his time, as well as of our own, showed a tendency to despise the only integral tradition of culture which has survived among us to any extent, the culture of our primitive closely-knit communities, on the basis of which alone a renaissance can be built up. Tagore realised, as Tolstoy did in Russia, that most of the life-giving qualities—simplicity, sincerity, sensibility—remain among the people while the false, imitative, pretentious gestures of the middle sections lead to vulgarity. And though we have no reason to romanticise our downtrodden people, the prey to many weaknesses, we know that they are the womb of our race, the source of all our strengths and frailties, the resilient core of our civilisation, who have kept our tradition alive, in however broken and bruised a form. They have been decimated in wars, they have been wiped out by floods, famines, and droughts; they have suffered and persisted perhaps in larger numbers than any other peoples, but they have survived and multiplied. And our destiny is bound up with them as of children to their parents, for we have to inherit the memories of their suffering and we have to expiate it in our art. We have to tend their disease-ridden bodies and heal them, for the *malaise* of our society is not congenital and can be cured if only we realise that the basic commodities: bread, rice, medicine, books, light, freedom, and peace can be produced on a very large scale to-day and that there are enough of these to go round the world, if we all so desire. Above all, in this hour of the crisis of European urban civilisation, when

we live continually under sentence of death from the threat of the atom bomb, we can bathe ourselves in the immortal spirit of our people and achieve the moral strength with which they have always struggled against the brute force of one tyrant after another.

II

If the attempt at a new religion of man was the first great contribution which Rabindranath Tagore made to our renascent effort, his second significant contribution was to incarnate some of the chief types of the emerging middle and lower-middle sections of Bengal in his writing, and to reintegrate the arts of poetry, drama, story, and particularly the novel, in our country. And in this he showed an even greater courage than any other Indian of his generation. For he was not afraid to present his own people to themselves, and the whole world, as they really are, without the fear of being abused and condemned for revealing them as saints and sinners, free spirits and chauvinists, parochial, slave-minded mendicants for favours and devotees, great peoples as well as small peoples, as great as any in the world and very small. But in this respect also he did more than merely reflect the life of the region of Bengal. He caught it in the grip of that peculiar moral tension which has arisen among us, through the clash of the two dominating traditions, the incoming hedonism of the west and the various strands of religion and custom of our own society.

That is to say he showed how the individual in the modern sense began to arise in his own society. And, more than his subject matter, he took the technique of prose fiction forward. The nature of his contribution to the making of an emotive prose style, by the amalgamation of the literacy language and common speech, has often been ignored because he was known in Europe, primarily, as a mystic poet. But, on the strength of his early novels alone, I will make so bold as to claim that Tagore was in the "formal" sense the *first* novelist of India.

Some people may wonder why, in view of the fact that so many novels were written in ancient India, why, in spite of the fact that before him Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had written copious fiction, I have chosen to

call him "the first novelist of India." So, let me explain what I mean by "the novel," and why I have so summarily dismissed Tagore's predecessors and successors in this field of activity. In a word, I want to differentiate between the old novel, or "recital" as I should like to call it, from the new "novel" in the contemporary sense.

The novel as an art form, with its own integral loss, arose in Western Europe roughly about a century and a half ago through the growth of an industrial society, which needed a highly finished mirror to reflect its complex problems. It is far in advance of the early mythical and poetic narratives, or even of the prose narratives born of the printing press, where whole chunks of narrative are strung together without much respect for the laws of balance and proportion.

Now, if we remember that the novel form has an inner coherence and sensitive logic of its own, we may roughly say that it has tended to be an ever more skilful representation of events in time, seeking the illusion of life through a dramatic sequence based on development of character. As such it is distinct from what, for want of a better word, may be called a report or a recital, which is the presentation of past events, as crudely as when an Arabian story-teller recounts a tale or as subtly as when a narrator regulates the reproduction in the light of his own, or some one else's, external opinions.

This is a somewhat tentative definition. But one can see that the long or short romantic narratives in the Indian epics, or the *Kavyas*, Court stories which developed from them, are still myth and legend, while Tagore's *Broken Ties* is a novelette; one can see that the *Adventures of Ten Princes*, by Dandin, who lived in the latter half of the seventh century, is prose recital, whereas *The Home and the World*, by Tagore, is an essay in the novel form; one can even see that *Anandanath*, by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, is an historical recital, while *Gora*, by Tagore, is an attempt at an historical novel.

As soon as Indian society began to break up under the impact of Europe, the old narratives remained only as survivals, and the modernist Tagore began to attempt more complex patterns to present the psychological

relationship of individual men and women in the newly arising society of Bengal. And the time was ripe for the emergence of the novel in India as an integral form.

It is in this sense that I choose to regard Tagore as the first novelist of India. For, although Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the predecessor of Rabindranath Tagore, has the vitality of experience and a grasp of life frequently absent in Tagore, he is mainly a romancer who is extending the old myth and legend of India, and the recital element survives in his work almost as in the lay of an ancient bard, minstrel, or troubador. It is true that Bankim displays intense feeling and even attempts to create character, as a *Rajani* or *Krishna Kanta's Will*, but even at his best he remains a story-teller, with a range limited by his religious fanaticism. So that his work cannot be considered as a great advance on the older fiction, except in so far as it was written in the nineteenth century, and was cast in the form loosely called "the novel."

I will not say that Tagore is altogether free from all, or at least some of the surviving traces of recitalism, but, all the same, he is a self-conscious artist in the novel form. And if there is a certain redundancy and a lack of vigour in his fiction as compared to Bankim's, it is more than compensated for by his lyricism and his sensitiveness. Alone among our nineteenth century writers, he shows a sense of humour in the midst of tragedy. And he has an uncanny gift for penetrating into the hearts, especially of his female characters. For who among us has created that eternal type of the Indian mother as is Anandamoi in *Gora*? Or that self-sacrificing, devoted girl who tames the priggish Gour Mohan in the same novel? Even Bimala the sincere, but muddled, wife of the liberal landlord Nikhil, in the *Home of the World*, is relieved in her blind and foolish worship of the manœuvring firebrand Sandip by the gentle and constant devotion she gives to an ideal. And the village girl in the *Wreck* shines like a flame in the face of all the oppression of society, forcing the hedonist lover, Ramesh, to respect her even as he longs for his beloved girl graduate from Calcutta. To the end this kind of woman recurs in Tagore's novels: the typical Indian women,

whom Tagore brings before us, sometimes shrill, sometimes gentle and devoted, and always saying "I want, I want," but challenging us, almost accusing us, with the words: "I constitute one-half of Indian civilisation—the suppressed half."

Then there are the old men of Tagore's novels: Paresh Babu, the patriarch in *Gora*, who is more or less the same figure with a new name as Anand-Babu in the *Wreck*; or the rationalist uncle in *Broken Ties*—the wise old men who are always the guides, philosophers, and mentors of all and sundry, consulting physicians of an old and bedridden society, who have diagnosed the age in which they live and who pass on the knowledge and help the young to usher in the new life. In this type, too, Tagore has delineated perhaps an idealised version of the cultured old gentleman whom we knew so well a quarter of a century ago, the liberal, common-sense spirits who recommend "sweet reasonableness" even as they compromised on the golden mean and whom we ignored or despised because we thought they lived in a kind of "no-man's-land." Tagore's portrayal of them teaches us that we must beware of adopting the cheap, histrionic manner of the European young in regard to old men, that we must not consider them as only fit for the rubbish bin, even though we do not share many things in common with them.

And then there are Tagore's young heroes, a whole galaxy of contemporary Indian portraits, from the lovers, who have learnt through modern education not to regard women as mere landscape; the friends, Gora and Benoy, and Amulya, the young student, devoted unto death; and the tough Europeanised share-pushers and go-getters, Haran, Sandip, Amrit Roy, and company. Representative of our age, they do not offer much hope; bitter, disillusioned, impetuous, mostly concerned to make romantic gestures, they are only relieved by the fact that Rabindranath shows very skilfully how much more they are sinned against than sinning. Victims of Moloch, they lapse for lack of opportunities, leaving their ideals behind them. But in the lovable and human qualities which cling even to the most vicious of them,

they remain in our memory as the poignant symbols of fighters who fell in the all-embracing manifold struggle of our generation to find a new way of life.

III

And this brings me to the third aspect of Tagore's genius, his search for a new way of life. For throughout his work this one fact predominates the atmosphere: that the struggle for a new way of life is eternal, perennial and on many different planes, and that it is primarily always the struggle for new values, the struggle, to be human, to be individual.

What is to be done? he continually asks. How are we to live between Asia and Europe? What are to be the fundamental values of our civilisation?

From the beginning of his career as a writer, Rabindranath Tagore was not only a poet but a philosopher. The early influence of his father, Maharishi Dabendranath Tagore, the mystic founder of the Brahmo Samaj, brought him into contact with ancient Hindu thought.

But his was no mere pedantic, parrot-like repetition of holy incantations and spiritual formulas; rather it was an attempt to define a new set of spiritual values, which could contribute something genuine to the solution of the intellectual crisis which was spreading from the West through the impact of nineteenth century science and rationalism.

In thus seizing upon the fundamental conflict of Asia and Europe, roughly representing the conflict between belief and unbelief, he showed the same insight as Goethe did in the Germany of his time. And like Goethe, he incidentally sought to seek for the meaning and purpose of life, away from the dogma of an authoritarian church and mere academism, and thus helped us to live a richer life.

His definition of "spiritual" experiences was, indeed, completely unconventional. For instance, he regarded much of the materialism of the West social relations as essentially spiritual in character. And he may be said to be the first Indian modern who inclined to the view that a new faith based on man's creative potentialities in

art and literature, music, philosophy, and science may arise, and through that a new world may be built up, far greater and higher in accomplishment than that which has been going down before our own eyes.

I must confess that I do not share his belief in some of the sanctions which he felt impelled to invoke from time to time. He was a pilgrim who carried a great deal of luggage on his back—souvenirs from our long past, mementoes, charms, tokens, &c. We, who are young, prefer to travel a little lighter. But I would be ungrateful if I did not record here the immense debt which our generation owe him for showing us that there are other ways of living than those thickly encrusted doxies, castes, and creeds, which, often cloaking venal greed, selfishness, and love of power, have fought each other in history and brought so much misery, bitterness, and frustration to generations of men, including our own.

For instance, in regard to science, he realised fairly early what we have come to see much later, that it should be regarded as a means and not as an end. He saw, even during the hey-day of the scientific endeavour of the nineteenth century, that in limiting their field of inquiry to inductive experiment under laboratory conditions, and in despising philosophers for pronouncing judgment on reality, the scientists were assuming a pontifical solemnity which would soon yield to a fit of humility in the face of unanswerable questions. True to the tradition of the old Indian sages he assimilated the reports of the laboratory, but never forgot that the beauty of falling water is not in the formula H²O, but in the colour, the sheen, and the movement of water. In effect, he was a poet of science. He hailed Darwinism and the Spencerian philosophy as great achievements of the observing mind, and he showed the deepest sympathy for Huxley's attempt to show the radical difference between men and the lower animals, but he never succumbed to the specialism of the nineteenth century European intellectuals. To the end he remained a whole man, actively interested in the æsthetic, social, moral, and political life of his time. And, through all experience, the inner flame, in the light of which he contemplated the world, was more important

to him than the mere sensationalism which registers impressions: "I am praying to be lighted from within," he said, "and not simply to hold a light in my hand."

The tendency of his thoughts, was, therefore, mainly modern and humanist. And he believed that, given courage and vision, man could subdue nature and himself sufficiently to his higher ends.

But what are the more concrete proposals he made to cure this sorry sick world of ours? I think that, by and large, he believed with O'Holbach that until social thinking revolutionises ideas and transforms institutions, the common life of society cannot advance.

And as he apprehended the nature of the change in the catastrophic upheavals of our age and yet saw that this change was not integral but mostly mechanical and superficial, and at the cost of much that he himself valued in the past, he crusaded for exchange of knowledge among the nations through a new kind of universalism. This ideal, a noble precursor of the dreams of our own day, is peculiarly Indian in feeling. It is an aspect of the tolerance which has characterised our history in spite of all our conflicts, a kind of sympathy or compassion, which was the basis of our old humanisms. Being a vast collection of peoples and nationalities ourselves, a kind of miniature cosmos of our own, with ten distinct major languages, and yet knit together for two thousand years by a common culture, we in India can claim to have been possessed by a strong passion for universalism for a very long time. The universalism of the old Buddhist ideal was proved when it travelled across frontiers and took roots in ancient China and Japan. Similarly the influence of the philosophy of the *Vedanta* on modern German thought, especially through Hegel and Schopenhauer, and on recent British thinkers, shows that the tendency of our thought has been mainly unitary and universalist. But it was through Rabindranath Tagore that Indian universalism became known to the modern world.

The final and decisive power to hold the peoples of the world together should, he felt, be left to the tolerance that the new type of man might practise. And he had

in mind the tradition which had united the multi-national populations of India in a common civilisation for long periods, in spite of their disparities.

But though he was a visionary who believed that, in sentiment, a multi-national civilisation was on the way through which individuals and nations might surrender their powers, he knew, as an Indian, that in actual fact several of the potentially freedom-loving nations were handicapped by the numerous aggressive nations, built on greed and plunder.

So he struggled against the imperialists of his day with a resilience that lends to his political thought a peculiar realism as well as a visionary quality.

Nor was he merely concerned to make paper pleas. He took active steps to put his idea into practice. Despising the "mendicancy" of our own politics on the one hand, and the exclusive cult of nation in Europe, he believed that a new kind of education alone could restore the balance and create real international understanding.

That was the kind of feeling which actuated him to open the world-famous school at Shantiniketan in Bolpur, Bengal, that later developed into the nucleus of an international university, the *Visva Bharati*. Here, the young from all parts of the world were brought up in harmony with nature and each other, and allowed to absorb, in an atmosphere of creative activity, as much and what they liked of book knowledge, and to cultivate their sensibilities so that they could grow up to be healthy individuals, independent, capable of taking initiative, happy and free from racial and national bias.

Also he travelled widely in Europe, America, and the Far East to promote world unity. And, with a fearlessness of spirit, rare in intellectuals nowadays, he continued to utter warning after warning of the Nemesis that would overtake civilisation if the nations of the West continued to flout all scruples in their lust for economic exploitation and political supremacy.

When, however, after the betrayals of their plighted word by the great powers in China, Abyssinia, Spain, and Czechoslovakia, against which we had vehemently

protested, the second world war at last came, he delivered one of the most moving personal addresses to the students of his international university on his eightieth birthday. It was a kind of reckoning in view of the judgment day, and he spoke from his heart, a bitter and disappointed man, but one who had not yet lost his faith in man:

“It is now no longer possible for us to retain any respect for that mockery of civilisation which believes in ruling by force and has no faith in freedom at all . . .

“And yet my good fortune has brought me into close contact with really large-hearted Englishmen. Without the slightest hesitation I may say that the nobility of their character was without parallel. Had I not met them, not even the faintest hope would mitigate my despair with regard to the Western nations . . .

“To-day my one last hope is that the deliverer will be born in this poverty-stricken country . . .”

Are not those words the echo, auguries of our own thoughts?

FUNCTIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

Helen Rosenau

BEFORE a civilisation decays and violent changes set in, some of its characteristic institutions frequently seem to reach their fullest degree of perfection. In this way highly developed slave-farms existed in the Roman Empire before the system of slavery broke down. Under Louis XVI a total enclosure was planned by Ledoux for Paris, where, as was customary in all French cities, a toll levy on victuals was demanded. The *barrières* were erected by the then famous Ledoux in the years 1784–89. These *barrières*, of a simple and austere character, combined classic reminiscences with a new æsthetic approach, emphasising the simplest geometric forms of architecture, the sphere, the cube, and the pyramid. It is this geometric

element which gives them a timeless character. In Ledoux's work the eighteenth century love of ornament gave way to clarity, elegance to functionalism—a functionalism which not only aimed at expressing the purpose of the architect, but the meaning of the buildings concerned. Frequently they were of an imposing character and appealed to the emotions. They were no longer frivolous, but sublime—in the sense in which this word was used in the eighteenth century.

When the toll-houses and gates fell in the year 1793, the fourth year of the Revolution, this was celebrated as an occasion of liberation and rejoicing. This fact is expressed in popular engravings, such as the one framed by symbols of plenty and representing Hermes opening the gates and thus allowing free trade to develop, whilst Apollo appears in the sky on the left and liberty, Ceres, and Bacchus are seen on the right. The revolutionary sense of liberation, economically correlated to the tenets of free trade, seemed at the time a panacea for all evils. For the architect and planner the French Revolution opened a vista of commissions by the state for buildings, monuments, and decorations for popular festivals.

These hopes proved abortive. The Revolution failed to carry out the progressive plans envisaged by the painter J. L. David and other contemporary artists. The Revolution found no permanent form in architecture, and its aspirations were mostly embodied in paintings and in decorations for festivals such as the Feast of the Supreme Being (1794). Here the stations of the people's cortege replaced the traditional processions of the Catholic Church. In this way the ideals of a rational and popular church "free of superstition" found a short-lived but none the less significant expression. It reveals that at this time the influence of "images" on the human mind, the impact of the physical environment, was well understood.

If we want to know more of the architecture of the late eighteenth century, it is to planning rather than to achievement that we have to turn. The great activity of town-planners is typical of the time. They foreshadow an evolution towards "democracy" in architecture, planning for the many, not for the few, for their needs and their

sometimes frustrated longings. This tendency to build for the masses accounts for two facts:

Firstly, that so few of these plans came to fruition in a society which possessed an aristocratic character, an aristocracy willing to absorb a rising *bourgeoisie*, but not ready to admit the masses of the people.

Secondly, that the scale of planned buildings suddenly changed, became imposing and monumental, or as Lemonnier called it, "megalomaniac," in violent reaction to the intimacy and charm of the rococo dwellings. The reversal from individualism to a sense of collective relationships found expression in this manner.¹

The most outstanding architect of planning rather than completion is probably Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806),² but he is preceded and surrounded by a host of others. This, by the way, is characteristic of all artistically creative periods: they are not caused by an "isolated genius" but by interacting social forces, which allow powerful personalities to develop.

Ledoux, who worked for Madame du Barry, and among whose patrons were the Minister of Finance, Calonne, and other leading adherents to the *ancien régime*, was the inspector and planner of the salt mines at Chaux, in Franche Comté; he failed to make his peace with the Revolution and was actually imprisoned by the Convention, although in his art he was anything but a reactionary. In fact he appears essentially as a revolutionary architect. Being unable to carry out his visions in stone, architectural designs and his writings remain the most essential part of his work.

Ledoux's great theoretical work, *L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art des moeurs et de la législation*, lays down as it were a blue-print for planning, not only isolated buildings, but plans for Chaux, including factories, living quarters, social centres, &c. His earliest

¹ *L'architecte*, V, 1910, p. 92ff. Cf. also the present writer's article in *Burlington Magazine*, July, 1946, p. 163ff. To add to the authorities here quoted is the recent book by M. Raval: *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux*, Paris, 1945. Especially important is the research of E. Kaufmann.

² Ledoux's monumental work: *L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art des moeurs et de la législation*, appeared in Paris in 1804-46. Cf. also F. Benoit: *L'art Français sous la Révolution et l'Empire*, Paris, 1897.

design for this city consists of a square sub-divided by another one with truncated angles. It is worth noting that in this plan for a complete town Ledoux goes back to the early Renaissance tradition rather than to an inspiration from his master Blondel's complex rococo designs for palaces with adjacent out-buildings. It is from Filarete's plan of 1464 for Sforzinda—an ideal town for a Sforza—and its successors that Ledoux derives his inspiration. Here are also found the two intersecting squares, whilst the centre is occupied by a fortress tower, a reminiscence of the medieval keep. Ledoux thus goes back to the late medieval and early Renaissance tradition, a period of rising individualism against a communal background, a situation not unlike the one of his own time.¹ But Ledoux evidently felt this design to be too complex and too small in conception, and he replaced it by a second elliptical one, the sphere and the cube being, in Ledoux's own words, the most satisfactory and eternal architectural forms. The salt works proper, developed on a semi-circle, reveal Ledoux strongly influenced by Roman architecture, but adapting classical motifs to novel industrial purposes. In this plan the most notable feature is the lack of orientation towards one superior point, the buildings of the ring being as important as the ones in the centre. A neighbourhood unit, rather than a subordinated district, is thus created. This essentially modern approach also appears in other designs, especially in those for the development of a site belonging to Hosten, a planter from San Domingo.

The architecture of Ledoux raises the problem of functionalism, a term which is nowadays frequently understood in a narrow sense, applied to works and institutions meeting the primary and especially the biological and technical needs of man.² If the concept is broadened, however, one will find that architecture is always functional; the function may be primarily religious as in a Catholic cathedral, magic as in a Polynesian hut, or industrial as in a modern factory.

¹ W. von Oettingen: *Traktat ueber die Baukunst*, Vienna, 1890, p. 84 ff.

² Cf. B. Malinowski: *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

Ledoux's House of Education, another example of his prophetic designs, is a building set in a characteristic eighteenth century garden adorned by sculptures. His interest in children and education is significant. He shows himself in this as in other respects a follower of Rousseau. It is worth noting in this context that Rousseau's sending his own children out to be brought up in the poorhouse was not as unusual in his own time as it would appear now. It was customary for French children to be educated outside their homes in all classes. Members of the nobility had their children boarded out and this may account for the absence of filial affection, so frequent in the higher classes during the eighteenth century.¹

It is also according to Rousseau's tradition when Ledoux emphasises the importance of pleasant surroundings for children. The architecture, with its big balconies, allows for the access of sunshine and fresh air, and its central lantern borrowed from Palladio fulfils a function, since it lights up a circular hall below.

An architect less important than Ledoux and more conventional in his approach is Jean Jacques Lequeu. During the Revolution Lequeu executed many drawings, one for a Hall of Justice decorated with the fasces symbol as a sign of unity meaning strength, and showing in the centre the statue of Justice surmounting the globe.

It is worth noting that the caption *L'Égalité Sainte* shows how religious notions were combined with secular purposes, and that the idea of sanctity did not disappear, but rather was translated to the body politic. This work, belonging to the year 1794 (year II of the Republic), is also worth investigating because of the Gothic pointed windows which are found flanking the central entrance. It shows a combination of classical and romantic elements characteristic of the artist's style. In the same year Lequeu designed a "monument" dated June 24th, 1793,

¹ The most famous example of an entire lack of understanding between father and son at this time is perhaps that between Count Honoré de Mirabeau and his father. But equally revealing is d'Alembert's mother's callous attitude towards her devoted illegitimate son, or the family background of Mlle. de Lespinasse.

following the old style for the exercise of sovereignty by the people in primary assemblies, in fact some sort of House of Commons. Combined with this is an emphasis on the symbolic character of the building, which takes on an almost religious significance: thus statues and busts of the "Martyrs of Liberty," and a group of "Liberty and Equality" with interlaced hands, are included.

The catholicity of Lequeu's taste, as well as his interest in archæology, can perhaps be best seen in his *Autography of the tomb of Porsenna*, designed in 1791, which deals with the problems of the labyrinth. Lequeu tries to reconstruct the ancient building with the help of Livy's text and follows up his literary studies with the investigation of an ancient Roman coin.

In Boullée (1728–1799) the Roman tradition is combined with the new notions of grandeur and monumentality which his period inspired.¹ Among his works he includes a project for the rebuilding of the Palace of Versailles; following the orders of the Count of Angiviller. The symmetrical foundations which he introduces form part of a baroque tradition, but the emphasis on the nudity of the walls and the simplicity of design express the spirit of the period. He went so far in his sympathies with the revolutionary movement that he showed the cross in a Roman setting adored by a priest, adding to this representation the caption: *Interior View of the Metropolis at the time of Obscurity*. He thus contrasts the "reasonable" religion with the traditional ceremonies of the Catholic church. Therefore this drawing may approximately be dated 1793.

In his plan of a museum which was a centre of a Temple of Fame, *à la Renommée*, Boullée shows himself influenced by Palladio's centrally planned buildings, but the scale is enlarged and the emphasis on colonnades which are reminiscent of cloisters, expresses the newly awakened interest in popular places of assembly. Boullée's drawing of the facade for a Chapel of the Dead, inspired by a pyramid, is flanked by two altars with burning braziers. This work, which was designed prior to

¹ Cf. E. Kaufmann in *Art Bulletin*, 1939, p. 213ff. The hitherto unpublished works by Boullée and Lequeu should be of great historical and artistic interest.

Ledoux's publication of *L'architecture*, marks a step in the development of Egyptian influences in French eighteenth century art.

Another of Boullée's plans is for a library, showing an austere facade adorned by the unique *motif* of a globe carried by two figures of Atlas. In the centre of the globe, surrounded by the constellations of the stars, the winged figure of Virgo is seen, a symbol of sowing, growth, and of spring, a vivid representation of the stimulating power of books.¹

Ledoux's influence on his contemporaries was confined to detail rather than to an appreciation of his more ambitious plans. Dubut multiplied Ledoux's effects,² without adding new ideas, and the same may be said of Vignon's Bourse of Paris of 1809, which is foreshadowed in Ledoux's *L'architecture*. This book also allowed Ledoux's inspiration to travel further afield. His influence is seen, for example, as late as 1819 in Van der Straeten's Palace of Tervueren in Belgium.

Gilly's ideas of town-planning, as seen in his tomb with surrounding precincts for Frederick the Great, in Berlin, shows Ledoux's influence in the austerity of composition as well as in the simplicity of the single opening of the arch.

Sir John Soane used in his triangular chapel for Tyringham (Bucks), in 1796, Ledoux's designs for the "guinguettes," the places of recreation planned for the outlying districts of Paris.²

In the works here discussed a unity of content and form may be perceived. Writers as different as Diderot,

¹ Cf. C. F. Dupuis: *L'origine de tous les cultes*, 1st ed. an III (1795). This interesting astrological and mythological study is dedicated to the author's wife, whose name replaces that of an influential or rich patron, in contradiction to the pre-revolutionary period. This change not only emphasises the Republican character, but throws light on a change of attitude towards marriage. The "marriage of true minds" is seen for example in the contemporary case of M. Lavoisier and his wife. I am indebted to Dr. F. Saxe for advice on astrological problems.

² Cf. L. A. Dubut: *Architecture civile*, Paris, 1803. An influence by Laugier as suggested by A. F. Bolton: *The Work of Sir John Soane* (Sir John Soane Museum Publications, 8, p. 20f.) is possible, although the type of construction on simple geometrical lines is more characteristic for the late eighteenth century and had attained popularity in Ledoux's plans for the "guinguettes." Ledoux's influence is also apparent in Nash's design for Regent's Park.

Sobry, Lessing, and Burke, agree on the interpenetration of ethics and æsthetics, in spite of their differences of personality and environment. The notion of the sublime, as defined by the Earl of Shaftesbury, Burke, Kant, and Quatremère de Quincy gives expression to this affinity. It is closely allied to the "beau ideal," the ideal vision which for Ledoux defies all rules (*L'architecture*, page 63). The sublime can also be regarded as a synthesis of the classical and the romantic which form no contrasting but supplementary elements.¹ It is in this light that eighteenth century classicism should be reconsidered. The motives might be traditional and could be used for "academic" repetitions, but frequently their interpretation was a novel one. The concept of the sublime itself, the emphasis on the greatness and timelessness of art, is valid in all periods, and may be applied equally to a still-life by Cézanne or a love scene by Watteau.

It is the vitality of the Greek and Roman models which made their "Renaissance" and their reinterpretation possible. But the unconventional rediscovery of the past in the late eighteenth century also allows no doubt as to the productive powers of that period.

The violent reaction against the art of the rococo, which set in during the late eighteenth century in France, is comparable to our contemporary challenge of "art for art's sake." Eric Newton put the rococo characteristics succinctly in a review of a recent exhibition:

Never can existence have been so purposeless and so refined. . . . It seems that a society that is utterly free from pressure from above and which chooses to ignore or suppress pressure from below . . . and has nothing to do but design for itself a perfect way of passing the time, can produce nothing but prettiness.²
The reaction against this art was not only a formal one.

¹ A certain formal contradiction, which has been criticised in the work of Ledoux (*Architectural Review*, 90, 1940, p. 124ff, and Raval *op. cit. passim*) is rooted in the sublime character of the architect's creation. It aims at a reconciliation of discordant formal elements, and challenges the rules of classicism. On the sublime, cf. S. Alexander, *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, London, 1933, p. 165f. Incidentally, Ruskin possessed a sense of the necessity of the integration of ethics and æsthetics, but marred it by an over-simplified standard of bourgeois valuations.

² *Sunday Times*, July 21st, 1946.

It was not due to a tiredness of the eye, as some art historians believe.¹ It illustrates the way in which fashions in art are closely related to changes in the way of life, including economic changes. But we must remember that, however important the economic aspects, man is a differentiated being with a variety of propensities and aspirations; and the "derived" functions form an integral and irreducible part of every civilisation and possess a dynamic power of their own.

The period prior to the French Revolution contained the germs of the later development, not only in politics and science, but in the visual arts as well. The urge of contemporary architects to abandon the "functional" approach in a narrow sense, to rediscover the world of the emotions, is a sign of a growing desire for social and psychological integration. In the work of Le Corbusier, in plans such as Sir Patrick Abercrombie's for Plymouth, the geometric and the imaginative elements play a prominent part. It is not being suggested that these architects consciously reverted to the past. But the similarity of their approach to one of the great visionaries of the late eighteenth century is not without significance.

In the past as well as now the underlying change in social conditions shows itself in a transition of artistic styles. The plans of the eighteenth century proved abortive, remained suggestions rather than achievements, and it may well be our own period which will witness the fruition of its frustrated endeavours.

¹ H. Woelflin: *Principles of Art History*, London, 1932.

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